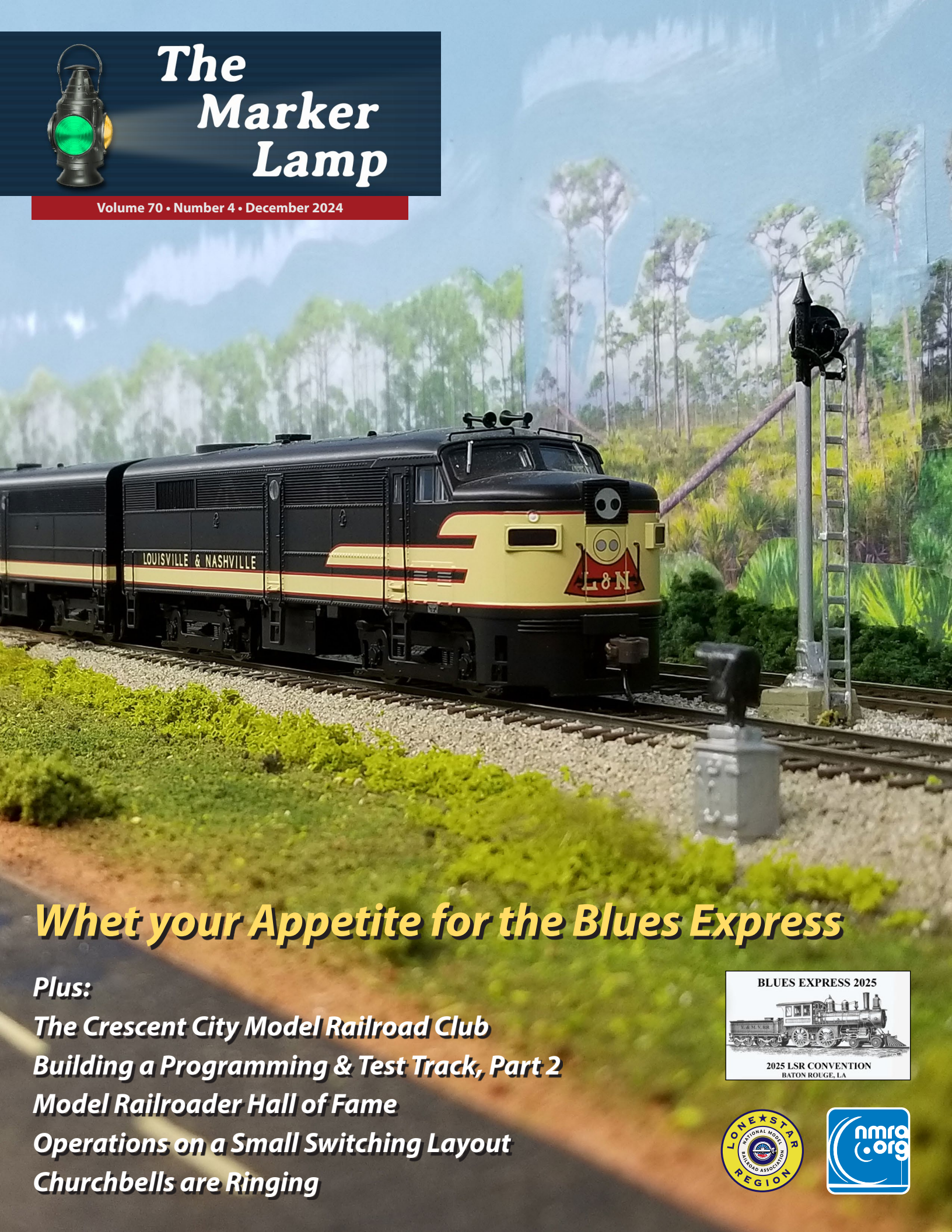

The Marker Lamp

Volume 70 • Number 4 • December 2024

Whet your Appetite for the Blues Express

Plus:

The Crescent City Model Railroad Club

Building a Programming & Test Track, Part 2

Model Railroader Hall of Fame

Operations on a Small Switching Layout

Churchbells are Ringing

The Marker Lamp

The Official Publication of
The Lone Star Region of the
National Model Railroad
Association

Volume 70, Number 4
December 2024

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The editorial policy of The Marker Lamp, the official publication of The Lone Star Region, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility. The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of The Lone Star Region of The National Model Railroad Association. Articles appearing in The Marker Lamp are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of The Lone Star Region or The National Model Railroad Association.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. Correspondence relating to Pike Ads and Dealer Ads should be addressed to Steve Sandifer steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net

Cover photos are from
Mike Waldorf's L&N Railroad
Featured on the Blues Express 2025
(Photos by Casey LeBlanc)

Submission Deadlines & Advertising Closing Dates

Spring Issue .....February 15
Summer Issue ..... May 15
Fall Issue..... August 15
Winter Issue ..... November 15

Internet Post Date:
Approx. 30 Days After Deadline. Materials received after the deadline will be held for the next issue.

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President's Message

by Donna Orr
donnalorrtx@gmail.com

The Joy of Model Railroading

As we come together as a community of model railroaders, the holidays are a great time to reflect on the unique joy that this hobby brings into our lives. Model railroading is more than just building miniature trains and tracks; it is a celebration of craftsmanship, creativity, and connection.

For many of us, the first spark of interest in model railroads came from childhood memories of watching trains around the Christmas tree. Today, as adults, we find ourselves continuing that journey—transforming a simple interest into intricate designs, realistic landscapes, and stories told through the movement of miniature trains.

At its heart, model railroading is about passion. It's about combining history, technology, and artistry to create something unique that speaks to the imagination. Whether you're focused on precision detailing, historical accuracy, or just the joy of watching trains run, model railroading allows us all to explore, learn, and grow.

The relationships we build along the way with fellow enthusiasts are just as meaningful as the models we craft. The friendships we share with others who understand the dedication and excitement that comes with each project are invaluable. Whether it's through train shows, local clubs, or online communities, the spirit of collaboration helps drive our shared passion forward.

As president, I am honored to be part of this incredible community and to witness the continued growth of model railroading. It's a hobby that constantly evolves—adapting to new technologies and ideas while still honoring the traditions of the past. From digital control systems to the intricate detailing of rolling stock, there is always something new to learn, something new to create, and something new to enjoy. I encourage all of you to continue pushing the boundaries of your creativity, to share your experiences and knowledge, and to inspire the next generation of model railroaders. Whether you are just starting out or have been a seasoned modeler for years, this hobby offers endless opportunities for discovery and achievement.

Merry Christmas!
Donna **ML**

From the Editor

by Peter Kazmir
peter@centexnmra.org

Safety First

As Secretary of the LSR, one of my responsibilities is to send out the mass emails that hopefully don't annoy everyone.

One of the emails that I have sent more than once now is a reminder about "phishing." This is where someone creates an email that looks like it's coming from someone else - your bank, an anti-virus company, or an officer at a company you work at - hoping to trick you into giving them private information (like the password to your checking account) or money (like a gift card, that you can't block payment on).

As a 501c3 non-profit, the LSR is required by law to publish certain information publically, including the names and contact information of our officers. That also makes us a target for phishing.

That's why LSR members will occasionally get emails that appear to be from Donna or Steve asking for help - a quick call, or for gift cards and they'll pay you back.

When that happens, it doesn't mean we (or you) have been hacked. But if you respond to that email, you could be tricked, and usually there's nothing you (or we) can do about it once it's happened.

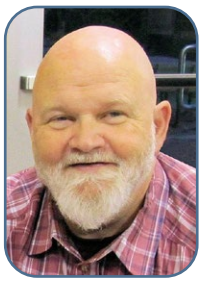
Be safe! If you receive an email that doesn't look quite right, don't respond. If you want to follow up with the person or company directly, do so, but not via the email. Go to the website, or call or email them directly. And always check the URL of any link or button you click on. That email may look like it came from Microsoft but if the URL is actually www.microsoft.8v7ah467.google.someotheraddress.com don't click on it. (And don't get me started on the "I got access to your webcam!" emails - which are all fake.)

I'm bringing this up not only because I occasionally send out those reminders and wanted to expound on it a little, but also to explain why this issue is a couple of weeks late.

Unfortunately a couple of weeks before Christmas, my household was the victim of some malware and several of our computers had to be completely erased and restored from backup. Fortunately I'm prepared for this but it took a couple of weeks to get back to normal. (And don't worry, all the LSR files were safe.) Just goes to show it can happen to anyone and backups are important.

But now I'm looking foward to a great new year, and I hope you have one too. Remember to keep the fun in Model Railroading - and be safe out there! **ML**

Up the Tracks Events Calendar



by Bill Dryden
LSR Events Chair

Here are upcoming events within the LSR of which I am aware. I will provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean from other publications, websites, etc., for these events. Additional information may be available through the *NMRA Magazine* and/or various trade magazines or various websites. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change. Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me, via e-mail at bdr149@airmail.net.

The Blues Express
2025 Lone Star Region NMRA Convention

June 26 - 29, 2025
Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South
9900 Airline Highway
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

Mark Your Calendar and Register Today!

https://bluesexpress2025.com

EVENTS AND SHOWS

December

7th – 8th, 14th – 15th, 21st – 22nd — *(San Antonio, TX)* **Santa's Railroad Wonderland** (Sponsored by the Texas Transportation Museum). Sat. 5:30 pm to 9 pm, Sun. 5:30 pm to 9 pm (parking opens at 5:15 pm, tickets Sales at 5:30 pm, last Admission 8 pm). Adults $12, kids (4-12) $10, kids (Under 4) free, groups (20+, ages 4+) $10 each. Tickets will be available at the door on limited quantity. Texas Transportation Museum, 11731 Wetmore Road, San Antonio, TX. More information: https://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/annualevents.

January 2025

18th – 19th — *(Dallas/Plano, TX)* **Winter Plano Train Show** (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $10, children 12 and under free (w/adult admission). Plano Event Center, 2000 E Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX. More information: https://www.dfwtrainshows.com/.

February 2025

15th — *(Houston/Pasadena, TX)* **2025 Greater Houston Train Show** (Sponsored by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club). Sat. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults & Teens $5, Under 12 Free (max $10 per family). Pasadena Convention Center, 902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX. More information: https://sanjacmodeltrains.org/GHTS.php.

22nd – 23rd *(San Antonio/Garden Ridge, TX)* **49th Annual Model Railroad Jamboree** (Sponsored by SAMRA). Sat. 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $10 (age 15+), children (age 14 and under) FREE (limit 3) per regular adult admission, Wounded Warrior and active duty military (and immediate family) FREE w/valid ID. City of Garden Ridge Community and Events Center, 9500 Municipal Pkwy., Garden Ridge, TX. For more information: https://www.samratx.org/train%20show.html.

August

23rd – 24th *(Austin, TX)* **Austin Train Show** (Sponsored by the Austin Model Railroad Society). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission $8 in advance, $10 at the door (children 12 and under FREE with adult). Admission includes both days. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road, Austin TX. More information: https://austintrainshow.org.

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

LSR Division 1 – Cowcatcher Division – Fort Worth, TX
The Cowcatcher Division meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. You can attend in person or via Zoom. For more information regarding the Cowcatcher Division or its programs, check their website: https://www.cowcatcherdivision.org.

LSR Division 2 - Bayou Division – Baton Rouge/New Orleans, LA
The Bayou Division meets quarterly at different locations. For information on future meetings contact Rod Fredericks at fredericks.rod@gmail.com.

LSR Division 3 - Trinity River Division – Allen, TX
The Trinity River Division meets at 10:00 am on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the Christ Servant Lutheran Church, Allen Texas. Occasionally things change due to scheduling conflicts so pay close attention to the email meeting notices that go out a week before the meeting. If you would like to be added to the email list contact Robert Secrest at Robert.Secrest@hotmail.com.

LSR Division 4 – Cen-Tex Division – Austin, TX
The Cen-Tex Division meets bi-monthly at the Austin Northwest Recreational Center, 2913 Northland Drive, Austin, TX. Meetings are held at 10:00 am on the 2nd Saturday of the *odd* months and include clinics, show-and-tell, DCC minute, social activities and a layout open house. For more information about upcoming meetings, see https://centexnmra.org or contact director@centexnmra.org to be added to the mail list.

LSR Division 5 - West Texas Division
Division 5 holds their meetings virtually on Zoom on the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 7:00 pm. Anyone that can join via Zoom is welcome to attend. Use this link to sign up for the division's monthly bulletin and keep up with events and happenings in the division: http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9 or email Headroadie2004@gmail.com.

LSR Division 6 – South Texas Division – San Antonio, TX
The South Texas Division hosts quarterly meeetings at the Longhorn Cafe at 12311 Nacogdoches Road in San Antonio. Please come out and join us for clinics, show-and-tell, tip and tricks, and the ever-popular Deal-or-Duds, along with great fellowship. For more information contact Roy Kaiser at fr8train@gvtc.com.

LSR Division 8 - Texas Gulf Division – Houston, TX
The Texas Gulf Division meets the 2nd Saturday of the *odd* months (except January, this year) from 10:00 am to 12 Noon at the Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston, TX 77055. For more information contact Phil Stewart at pstewart1225@yahoo.com.

—

Alamo Model Railroad Engineers - San Antonio, TX
The Alamo Model Railroad Engineers meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Zucht Building at the Texas Transportation Museum, 11791 Wetmore Rd., San Antonio TX. For more information call (210) 490-3554 (weekends 9:00 am to 4:00 pm; voicemail only M-F) or visit the website at https://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/ho-scale-indoor-model-railroad.

All Points Model Railroad Association - Conroe, TX
The All Points North Model Railroad Association is open to new members and has business meetings in their clubhouse on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10:30 am. For more information, including a calendar of activities, please visit their website at http://apnmrr.org/.

Austin Model Railway Society - Austin, TX
The Austin Model Railway Society is a HO scale modular group that is open to new members and meets once a month. For more information please email Steve Jackobs at president@austinrailway.org or visit the web site www.austinrailway.org.

The Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders - Jackson, LA
Our mission: to educate and inform the public on the hobby of model railroading, associated disciplines, and to entertain both children and adults through our numerous displays featuring both model trains, real railroads and railroad safety. The Trains run from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month! THE PUBLIC IS INVITED! Located at the Republic of West Florida Historical Museum, 3406 College St, Jackson, LA. More information: http://www.greaterbrrailroaders.com/.

Houston Area "G" Gaugers - Rosenberg, TX
The Houston Area "G" Gaugers (HAGG) model train club meets at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum on the 4th Sunday of each month to run their special trains on the tracks of the Garden Railroad Exhibit. The museum also hosts fun seasonal activities for the kids on this day. Steam engines, circus trains, patriotic trains or everyone's favorite Thomas? You never know what trains you'll see. Rosenberg Railroad Museum, 1921 Avenue F, Rosenberg, TX. More information: info@RosenbergRRMuseum.org.

Houston Area Live Steamers - Hockley, TX
HALS has over 9,000 feet of track for you to enjoy and ride on most any Saturday of the year. Someone is usually there every Saturday with special run, operations, waybills/timetable, work and fun run days scheduled throughout the year. Our public run days are the 3rd Saturday of the month March through November. Come see our 2,500 foot expansion in Phase 4. Model Railroaders (any scale) are welcome to attend most any time. Check our web site out at www.hals.org for schedule of events or e-mail Rick White at rick.white.jr@gmail.com for more information.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum - New Braunfels, TX
Kids Fun Day is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 South San Antonio Street (in the 1907 Restored Railroad Depot), New Braunfels, TX. Museum phone (830) 627-2447. Kids of all ages will have the opportunity to run model trains and become a Jr. Engineer. Also among the displays at the Kids Fun Day will be a large US Army Model Garden (G) Scale and Lego Trains. Visit our Steam Engine, Caboose, Dining Car (available for Birthday Parties) and Box Car. There will be other fun, train related activities, additional model trains, train artifacts, our 1907 depot are on display. The Railroad Museum opens at 10:00 am on Saturdays. For field trip scheduling and more information, call Susan Riordon (210) 542-6121, or visit us at www.nbrrm.org.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs – Irving, TX
The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Visit the website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site, member clubs or sponsored events.

San Antonio Model Railroad Association - San Antonio, TX
The San Antonio Model Railroad Association, SAMRA, is open to new members and meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Bob Clarke Rail Heritage Museum, 7702 Narrow Pass, Live Oak, TX. Please visit our website www.samratx.org for information about our activities and their dates and times. Also, like us on Facebook.

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club – Dallas, TX (North)
The Texas Northern Model Railroad Club business meeting is the 1st Thursday of the month and has regular meetings on Thursday evenings and most Saturdays. If you like to operate, come by on Tuesday nights to join our weekly operation session. Located in North Dallas at 11999 Plano Road., Suite 154, Dallas, TX 75243. For more information: www.texasnorthern.org.

Texas Western Model Railroad Club – Forest Hills, TX
The Texas Western Model Railroad Club meets for its business meeting every 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. The Club is located at 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org or email cdo@twmrc.org.

EXCURSION TRAIN TRIPS

Austin Steam Train; Cedar Park, TX; (512) 477-8468; www.austinsteamtrain.org

Grapevine Vintage Railroad; Grapevine, TX; (817) 410-3185; www.gvrr.com

Old Hickory Railroad; Jackson, LA; (225) 634-7397; www.louisianasteamtrain.com

Texas State Railroad; Palestine & Rusk, TX; (888) 987-2461; www.texasstaterr.com

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event. Column submission deadlines are the 15th of February, May, August, and November. Publication of the *Marker Lamp* is the following month. **ML**

Whose track goes there?

Can you figure out whose layout this photo is from? If you are the first person to email the correct answer to rrrduino@huntatrophy.com you'll win a campfire lighting Arduino!

The photo in the September issue was of Montgomery Feed in Decatur on the operating layout of Keith Brewer, modeling the Wichita Falls Division of the Fort Worth & Denver Railway (FW&D).

Whet Your Appetite for the Blues Express

by Eric Smith
2025 LSR Convention Publicity Chairperson

In the last issue of the *Marker Lamp* I introduced you to many interesting places to see and things to do around Baton Rouge. What I was holding back on was where to eat in the area! This historic city has so many local places to eat that it can be difficult for visitors to parse through an unfamiliar restaurant scene to know where the good food is located. However, Baton Rouge shines on tourism and has the cuisine to meet the needs of the travelers and connoisseurs of fine dining. With the city being located between New Orleans and the heart of Cajun country, food in this area rates as some of the best in the world in my opinion.

I asked my daughter who lived in Baton Rouge where the best places to eat were located. She is married to a Louisiana boy who graduated from LSU, in Baton Rouge, and so I'm going to take their advice on what are their top 10 places to eat. She said this list originally had 29 and they pared it down to 10 with a variety of flavorful options. This is their opinion after "12 years rattling around the tracks of Baton Rouge looking for the best place to eat."

So, Where to Eat in Baton Rouge:

1. Elsie's Plate & Pie

3145 Government St
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

https://elsiespies.com/
6.5 miles from the convention hotel

This restaurant was voted number #1 by public vote in Baton Rouge administered by the area's own "Best of 225" publication. Elsie's claims to have some of the best pies you'll ever have - whether savory, hand, or sweet variety, but the good flavor doesn't stop at pie as Elsie's wins with the whole menu.

Elsie's Plate & Pie is named in memory of Elsie Marie Campeau Rupe of Lockport in Lafourche Parish, maternal grandmother of Proprietor and Chef Paul Chauvin Dupré. Whenever you were invited to eat at Elsie's house or just happened to drop by at mealtime, there were a number of joys of which you could always be certain: First, you would be warmly greeted with a smile and often with a hug and a kiss. If she was expecting you, you could count on one of your favorite meals. Finally, there would be more than enough for everyone, so you could always enjoy leftovers at home. And then there were the pies! Elsie began baking them because they were the favorite dessert of her beloved Carl, whom she married in 1944. Pies became a major food group at Elsie's table, and it is only natural that her grandson Paul has continued the tradition.

Of all Chef Paul's decisions in planning the opening of his restaurant, naming it was by far the easiest. Inspired by the grandmother he loved, the menu offered by Elsie's Plate and Pie with her in mind, incorporate not only his Ma's cooking style but also her secret ingredient - love - that was so much a part of the meals she shared. Chef Paul believes that nothing he gained during his years in the kitchens of some of the most popular Baton Rouge restaurants is more important than the secret ingredient he learned from Elsie.

Paul Dupré is proud to share his grandmother's Lafourche legacy and his own creations with Baton Rouge and welcomes you to Elsie's Plate and Pie.

My daughter's recommendation: Try the Louisiana Poulet Pot Pie or the Boudin Grilled Cheese and finish with a Lemon Ice Box Pie.

2. The Chimes Highland

3357 Highland Rd
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

https://thechimes.com/
7.4 miles from the hotel

The Chimes is a Baton Rouge staple and the meeting place of LSU alumni it has been an LSU tradition for over 25 years. Sitting at the north corner of campus called Northgate,

The Chimes boasts over 100 beers on tap and delicious Louisiana favorites. The rooftop terrace offers great views of LSU's campus.

Recommendation: Try the Boudin Balls, Blackened Gator, Catfish Perdu, or Red Beans & Rice.

By the way, don't miss the original Raising Cane's location on your way to The Chimes right across the street from LSU.

3. Juban's

3739 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

https://www.jubans.com/
5.5 miles from the hotel

For over 40-year history, the local family-owned Juban's Restaurant has cultivated the reputation as one of Baton Rouge's first and most popular for fine dining. Many celebratory dinners, large and small events will continue with the traditions in a beautifully enhanced establishment, decor and reimagined menu. The wine list features close to 200 producers. The kitchen is led by Chef Chris Motto, formerly of Mansurs on the Boulevard and a competitor on Gordon Ramsay's reality show, Hell's Kitchen, in 2019. Motto has worked to create a new Juban's menu that reflects its classic-meets-contemporary vibe.

Juban's offers a taste of New Orleans fine dining in Baton Rouge. Come here for an elegant white tablecloth experience with artful southern decor and fantastic chef crafted specialties. Every Saturday and Sunday, Juban's hosts a jazz brunch from 10am to 3pm.

Try the Hallelujah Crab, Louisiana Two Birds, or the Ora King Salmon.

4. Rocca Pizzeria

3897 Government St
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

https://www.roccapizzeria.com/
6.7 miles from the hotel

Rocca Pizzeria serves Neapolitan wood-fired pizza in a cozy dining atmosphere. They claim Old-World Italy, right in Mid-City Baton Rouge. Their cooking techniques are inspired by the Neapolitan pizza tradition – one that stands the test of time and a wood-fueled trial by fire of almost 800 degrees.

Try the Garlic Knots, Meatballs, and any pizza off the list, though the Pistachio is a favorite.

Don't miss the cannoli's at Cannatella Grocery, an Italian grocery next to Rocca, if you are in the area before it closes at dinnertime.

5. Parrain's Seafood Restaurant / Sammy's Grill Highland

Parrains: 3225 Perkins Road
Sammy's: 8635 Highland Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

https://parrains.com/
https://sammy-s-grill.com/
5.6 miles from the hotel

We're grouping these two fantastic seafood restaurants together as they sit within the same Louisiana seafood

vein and are near to each other. Both serve the classic fried seafood dishes and po'boys. While Sammy's leans toward the boiled favorites, specializing in boiled crawfish, Parrain's leans into the Louisiana fresh fish dishes topped in specialty sauces named after Louisiana waterways, like "The Maurepas" with pecans and Meunière sauce.

Parrain's opened in September 2001 with a commitment to bring you the freshest and highest quality seafood in town. They have mouth-watering selections featured daily on an extensive menu. They offer daily specials for lunch and dinner as well as select brunch items on Sundays. The menu includes delicious items that are prepared fresh to order.

Sammys is a hometown favorite for tailgating and watching LSU games since 1988. The casual atmosphere and friendly service makes it fun to meet up for great food and drinks. They serve a mix of authentic Louisiana food prepared to order with the best ingredients available. Enjoy fresh Louisiana seafood, Cajun favorites, burgers and po-boys built from scratch. The kid's meals and popular appetizers are sure to please the pickiest of eaters. Just tell your server how you like it!

Sammy's is one of my personal favorites especially when the crawfish are in season. You order them by the pound! YUM!

6. Zeeland Street Market

2031 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

https://zeelandstreet.com/
6.2 miles from the hotel

Recently this small hole in the wall dining spot appeared in the New York Times "2024 Restaurant List" of the top 50 American restaurants. It is the best plate lunch spot in the city, possibly in the country. Zeeland Street serves a cooked from

scratch breakfast and lunch. In the evening, Zeeland Street transforms into fine dining restaurant Beloved for dinner.

Try the Pot Roast and Pecan Smoked Brisket. One reviewer said they have the best shrimp and grits in the entire universe!

7. The Little Village

14241 Airline Hwy
Baton Rouge, LA 70817

https://www.littlevillagebr.com/
5.7 miles from the hotel

Try authentic Italian food at The Little Village's two fine dining locations, downtown or in Prairieville off of Airline Highway. Tell any Baton Rouge native that you are heading to Little Village and they'll comment on the bread, which has won the best bread in the city year after year.

Few restaurants can claim they started with a raid. Back in 1945, a young entrepreneur named Vince Distefano was running a card game called Georgia Skin out of a leased building on Florida Boulevard. The men played for horses and Vince's wife, Stephanie, made good tips cooking for the

crowd. After a surprise morning visit from a local sheriff, all of the inhabitants (including the Distefanos) were hauled off to jail. The sheriff, not above the occasional "unofficial" visit to the Distefano establishment, offered some sage advice: Get out of town - at least outside the city limits. The family bought a wooded seven-acre fishing camp on Airline Highway from the Catholic Church and built a new place beyond the long arm of the law. As the games' participants grew and the cars parked out front increased, travelers frequently mistook the building for a restaurant. Eventually, the Distefanos decided they might as well feed all those hungry motorists and The Village was born.

Try the Village Bread with Red Sauce, Eggplant Parmigiana, or Beef Florentine Cannelloni.

They have 2 locations, one of which is downtown. If you go to the downtown location, you don't want to miss Louisiana's Train de la Reconnaissance. The historic French Gratitude "Merci" Train sitting by the Old State Capital is a WWII boxcar, one of 48 given to the USA as a "thank you."

8. Bldg 5 Market|Kitchen|Patio

2805 Kalurah St. (Under the Perkins Overpass)
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

https://bldg5.com/
5.9 miles from the hotel

Bldg 5 (pronounced "building") sits partially under the Perkin's Overpass and I-10 and offers fresh, flavor packed healthful meals. The menu boasts whole ingredients, with grazing boards piled with meat, veggies, and cheese, and serves options for everyone, including vegetarians and Whole30 diners. The parking situation in the Perkin's Overpass area is not ideal with a limited gravel lot area, but the savory food makes up for it.

The owner's met on the Hollywood set of America's Sweethearts, where Misti Broussard worked in production and Brumby Broussard served as Julia Roberts' personal assistant. They instantly connected over their southern roots and their desire to move back one day to raise a family. Leading up to their Capital City voyage, the two owned an upscale, modern furniture store and art and design gallery in San Diego that boasted one-of-a-kind pieces. It was in this very space that Brumby, who graduated from the Culinary Arts Institute of Louisiana, first began to tap into not only his love of cooking, but also the effect of sharing it with others. They quickly realized why the kitchen is the heart of every home and saw the importance of bringing that sense of hospitality with them into future endeavors.

Try any dinner charcuterie board, Braised Short Ribs, or make your own protein packed Power Bowl at lunch.

The Perkin's Overpass bridges the CPKC railroad that cuts through the city. For a train enthusiast, it makes a scenic view looking down the treelined tracks, though it is a steep hike from Bldg 5.

9. Dempsey's

13580 Coursey Blvd
Baton Rouge, LA 70817

https://www.facebook.com/Dempseysbr/
3.9 miles from the hotel

Dempsey's seafood looks inconspicuous from the outside, but inside is a contender for best gumbo in the state. With authentic Louisiana cooking, burgers and sandwiches, this joint has something for everyone.

Try the Gumbo, Seafood Stuffed Potato, or a Po'Boy sandwich.

10. Cou-Yon's Cajun Bar-B-Q

470 N Alexander Ave
Port Allen, LA 70767

https://www.couyons.com/
10 miles from the hotel

Sitting across the river in Port Allen, Cou-yon's is worth the bridge traffic, blending BBQ and creole flavors with laid-back home cooking. At Cou-Yon's, the Smoked Meats and

homemade BBQ sauces blend legendary South Texas BBQ flavors and Cajun flair for zesty, mouth-watering goodness that will keep you coming back. If BBQ doesn't suit your fancy, enjoy the fresh-caught seafood, famous stuffed baked potatoes, or crisp salads prepared with the same passion that goes into the BBQ.

If the Mississippi River bridge drive is not appealing, on Tuesdays through Saturday, you can catch the Cou-Yon's food truck on Perkins & Acadian for a limited menu.

Try the Ribs, Chicken Quarter, and the Bourbon Bread Pudding.

If driving across the river, be sure to tour the Port Allen Railroad Depot Museum, with a restored caboose and exhibits highlighting the railroad life of the 1940s.

Honorable Mentions:

- Drusilla's Seafood Restaurant (Seafood)
  3482 Drusilla Ln. Suite D
  Baton Rouge, LA 70809
  https://drusillaplace.com/
  1.4 1.4 miles from the hotel
- Bistro Byronz (French/Cajun)
  515 Mouton Street
  Baton Rouge, LA 70806
  https://www.bistrobyronz.com
  7.1 miles from the hotel
- Anthony's Deli (Italian)
  5575 Government Street
  Baton Rouge, LA
  https://bestmuffoletta.com/
  4.2 miles from the hotel
- Monjuni's (Italian)
  711 Jefferson Hwy
  Baton Rouge, LA 70806
  https://monjunis.com/
  3.9 miles from the hotel
- Mestizo (Mexican)
  2323 S Acadian Thruway
  Baton Rouge, LA 70808
  https://www.mestizorestaurant.com/
  5.1 miles from the hotel
- Chow Yum (Pan-Asian Street Food)
  2363 Hoyyldale Ave
  Baton Rouge, LA 70808
  https://www.chowyumbr.com/
  5.7 Miles from the hotel

Bonus! Just north of Baton Rouge:

11. The Francis Southern Table & Bar

6747 Hwy 61
Saint Francisville, LA 70775

https://www.francissoutherntable.com/
37.5 miles from the hotel

Sit on the massive patio under the oaks and enjoy southern Louisiana cuisine. Try the Duck Confit, Fried Frog Legs, and Chargrilled Oysters.

After eating at The Francis, head to the Old Hickory Train Museum in Jackson, LA (another 11 miles) for steam train model layouts. Check their Facebook page for hours ahead of time.

I hope this list has made you hungry and anxious to try some of the excellent food in and around Baton Rouge. I know that my stomach is growling in anticipation just thinking about some of the items listed on the menus from these excellent restaurants. I look forward to seeing you all in Baton Rouge to share your dining experiences at some of these restaurants, or some that you find on your own! Bon Appetit! **ML**

Convention Update

by Rod Fredericks
Blues Express 2025 Convention Chairman

Preparations for the Blues Express 2025 LSR convention here in Baton Rouge this summer are in full swing now. The registration site is up and running at BluesExpress2025.com. Check out the list of excellent clinics and clinicians that Chuck Lind has put together. Also, there is a listing of the rules for a special convention category highlighting the convention's bayou theme that Ray Byer has worked up for us. It is a 12" x 12" x 12" diorama cube featuring a swamp/railroad theme. It will follow the same LSR Contest Rules as for "Displays/Modules". Sounds like fun.

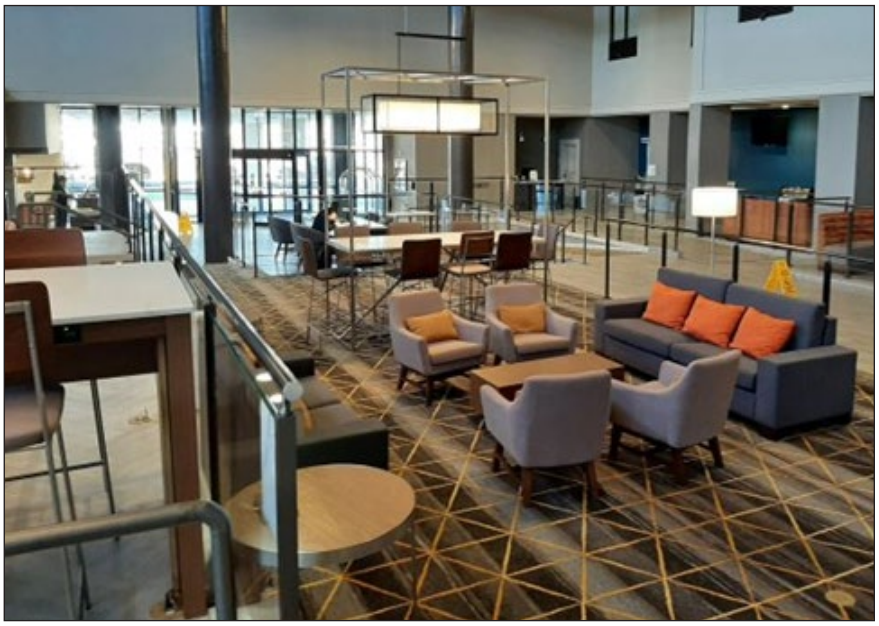
The U.S.S. Kidd

The convention will follow the proven formula of past LSR conventions, starting of Thursday (June 26th, 2025) late afternoon, running through to the awards banquet on Saturday evening (June 28th). There will be clinics presented by clinicians from the LSR region and afar, most for the first time. There will also be layout visits from area modelers and clubs. Operating sessions are also being organized by Speed Muller.

Then there are the Non-Rail activities being organized by Divina Gato-Hogna. Baton Rouge is a small river city with a diverse history dating back to the 18th century. There are many sights to be seen starting with the museum complex centered around the old train depot, the Louisiana State Museum & Planetarium, and the Old State Capital Building (described by Mark Twain during his river piloting days "as the ugliest building on the Mississippi River"). Then there's the river walk and marine museum featuring a WW II destroyer, the U.S.S. *Kidd*, all of which are short walking distance of each other. And of course, there is LSU with the live Mike the Tiger in his own habitat right on campus outside Tiger Stadium. All of this and the Non-Rail activities at the hotel.

With a number of rail lines running through and around Baton Rouge (major, port and industrial), keen railfanning is also possible. (See "Railfanning in Baton Rouge" by Casey LeBlanc in the previous *Marker Lamp*.)

The convention hotel, the Holiday Inn South, has been reserved. This is a large facility that has been recently remodeled. It is located on the intersection of I-12 and Hwy



Mike Waldorf's L&N Railroad

61 (Airline Highway), which gives easy access to New Orleans and points north, south, east and west.

Mike Waldorf will be hosting an open house and an operating session on his layout in Covington, LA, an 80 minute drive on I-12 from the hotel. (The layout is featured on this issue's covers.) The layout is also only 25 miles over the Lake Pontcharain Causeway to the Crescent City Model Railroad Club in Metairie (in the New Orleans area), or 70 minutes from the hotel via I-10 South. And then 45 minutes north of the hotel (in Jackson, LA) is the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders multi-layout facility (see the arcticle in the previous MR issue). My layout, the Silver Valley & Zenith, only 15 minutes from the hotel, will also be open fo visits. (See cover of the previous *ML*.)

Although farther away from the convention hotel, Art Houston's Grande Pacific layout in Houma, LA will also be open for visits and operations. The drive is about an hour and 45 minutes, but well worth the time.

Only a part of Art Houston's Grande Pacific Railroad

Final times for layout visits and operating sessions will be finalized in the near future and published in upcoming issues of the *ML*, and on the convention website. Anyone with a layout who wishes to join the show, either for visits to their layout or for operating sessions, can contact me at fredericks.rod@gmail.com (Note: No visits will be scheduled during operation sessions.)

That's the story to date, but check the website often for updates as things develop, and register today! **ML**

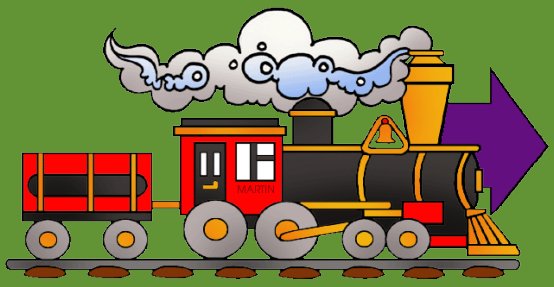
The Crescent City Model Railroad Club

by Matthew Lacrouts

Further south near the swamps in Jefferson Parish lies one of the oldest clubs on The Gulf Coast, The Crescent City Model Railroad Club. Founded in 1956 and located just over an hour from the convention hotel it certainly is a sight to see. The club models the fictional Crescent Lines River Division which operates from Vicksburg to Crescent City. With over 400 feet of mainline and numerous switching opportunities there is plenty to see and do. Information on the open house will be available soon and we can't wait to see you then. **ML**

HORSE-SHOE
CRABS
CRAWFISH
SHRIMP
HORSE-SHOE

CRESCENT CITY MODEL RAILROAD CLUB



Wanted!
Nominees for the LSR Youth Award

Who: Any boy or girl 18 years old or younger with an interest in model railroading

Where: One nominee from each LSR Division

A past awardee: May be renominated for another year if they meet the qualifications specified in the LSR Constitution. **Contact Chuck Lind** chucklind46@gmail.com

How: Fill out the special Youth Award Membership Form available on http://www.lonestarregion.com/

When: Submit your nomination to your LSR Division Director **today**!

For more information contact:
Chuck Lind, Youth Chairman: chucklind46@gmail.com

Join the new Lone Star Region
Member Directory

The LSR is building a new member directory. We wish to emphasize that participation is entirely optional. Only information provided by participants will be included, and visibility is limited to LSR members - the directory will not be publicaly accessible on the internet.

We encourage all members to participate. The directory will be especially valuable for members looking for model railroads to visit while travelling throughout the region.

To participate, simply click this link below to access the directory form and enter your information: https://forms.gle/k984mbh7RazPKs6o8

Note that it is not necessary to have a Google account to log in or to use the form. If you have any questions about the directory, please contact Chuck Lind at chucklind46@gmail.com.

Building a Programming and Test Track - Part 2

by Michael Harang
miharang@gmail.com

Part 1 of this series was printed in the June 2024 *Marker Lamp*. In that article, I wrote that the Excel spreadsheet and panel drawings would be included in Part 2. The latter half of 2024 has been extremely busy for me, so only the Excel spreadsheet containing the needed electrical and electronic components for the main power are ready.

I am working on learning a CAD program to draw the panel sections. This serves two purposes: 1) the CAD program can output a G-Code file that the CNC process uses to manufacture the component(s) to precise tolerances, and 2) knowing CAD will allow me to draw other parts and pieces for model railroad related items to be constructed on either CNC or 3D printing machines.

I try to use a single electronic source to save on shipping costs. So, the below spreadsheet lists components from Mouser Electronics. The component, its purpose, its part designation, the Mouser part number, quantity needed, unit cost, and extended cost are included.

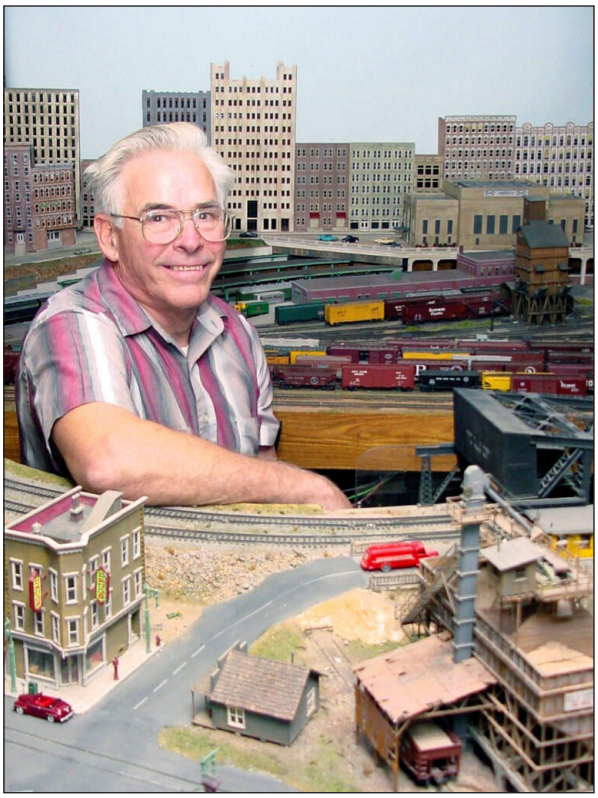
Finding a variable 12 Volt DC transformer circuit diagram compatible with the other components in the test track fixture has eluded me thus far. Once I have that determined, I'll include those components in later installments of this series.

See you down the tracks,
Mike **ML**

Component	Purpose	Designation	Component location	Mouser Part Number	Qty	Cost	Extended Cost
Main AC Power							
3 Prong AC power entry socket, male	Main AC power input	J1	Rear 1	693-6200.2100	1	$3.14	$3.14
DPST toggle switch, 120 VAC, 16A	Main AC power switch	SW1		629-GTS448F301AHR	1	$6.25	$6.25
5mm (T5) Panel Mount LED, Green	Main AC power on/off indicator	D1		696-SSI-LXR4815GD	1	$3.12	$3.12
120 Ω 1/8 watt resistor	Current limiting resistor for D1	R1			1		$0.00
Fuse, 15 A, 250V, Slo-Blo, 5 x 20 mm	Main AC power input fuse for AC entry socket J1	F1		576-0218015.HXP	3	$1.79	$5.37
ATX power supply, 180 watt	Power Supply for 3V, 5V, and 12 V	PS1		used pc power supply	1	$15.00	$15.00
Fuse holder, 4 position	Power supply output protection	XF2		534-3539	1	$6.12	$6.12
Fuse, 3AG style (6 x 32 mm), 0.50 A	Power Supply output protection for individual voltages	F2		530-3AG500-R	3	$0.81	$2.43
Fuse, 3AG style (6 x 32 mm), 0.75 A	Power Supply output protection for individual voltages	F3		530-3AG750-R	3	$0.81	$2.43
Fuse, 3AG style (6 x 32 mm), 1.25 A	Power Supply output protection for individual voltages	F4		530-3AG1.25R	3	$0.83	$2.49
Fuse, 3AG style (6 x 32 mm), 2.00 A	Power Supply output protection for individual voltages	F5		530-3AG2-R	3	$0.80	$2.40
Binding post, RED	Power supply output terminals	J2, J3, J4, J5		112-R1-01B-R	4	$1.69	$6.76
Binding post, BLK	Power supply output terminals	J2, J3, J4, J5		112-R1-01B-B	4	$1.48	$5.92
						Total this section:	$55.51

Model Railroader Hall of Fame

by C. Randall Wilson
(Photo by Doug Jackson)



In its December 2024 issue, *Model Railroader* magazine unveiled the names of its inaugural Model Railroader Hall of Fame. Three of the twelve inaugural inductees are from the LSR: Gil Freitag. Frank Ellison and Malcolm Furlow.

Model Railroader Editor Eric White explained the creation of the Hall of Fame. "I was giving a tour of the old MR offices and presented the John Allen steam locomotive that sat in Andy Sperandeo's office for years. The two middle-aged guys were unmoved. I mentioned the Gorre & Daphetid, their faces were blank. I knew right then that we had to do something so the people who helped develop the hobby weren't forgotten."

Gil was nominated to the Hall of Fame for his promotion of model railroading as a hobby. Prior to Gil being inducted into MR's Hall of Fame, Gil was the first recipient of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Fellows Award for promotion of the hobby. NMRA President Charlie Getz wrote about Gil (and Virginia), "The Fellow Award, of which you were the first recipient, was created with you in mind. No better ambassadors of Model Railroading exist and no one has done more for our hobby than the two of you."

It is hard to understate the uniqueness of Gil's promotion of model railroading. Gil opened his home to the general public. Almost all home layout tours across North America are sponsored tours by a local club or a NMRA event. You must be a model railroader before you are invited to tour a model railroad! Gil and Virginia opened the Stoney Creek and Western to **everyone**. Through San Jac home layout tours and numerous TV segments non-model-railroaders were exposed to model railroading. Thousands of model railroads share the memory of visiting the Stoney Creek and Western and having Gil hand them a throttle and encourage them to run the trains on his incredible layout. Gil and Virginia hosted visitors from around the world that came to see the layout and also stayed a night or two in the Freitag's home.

Much of the success of San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's November home layout tours can be traced back to Gil. Gil never said "no children" during an open house. In fact, he said much of his layout was built low for the enjoyment of children. Gil never said no photographs, no one was told to leave purses or bags downstairs. Because of Gil and Virginia's invitation to everyone, other layout owners in South Texas realized that if a layout as spectacular as the Stoney Creek could be open and enjoyed by the general public, then their layout could too. Now each November dozens of South Texas layouts are open to the public.

Congratulations to Gil Freitag, Frank Ellison, and Malcolm Furlow for their well-deserved induction to the Model Railroader Hall of Fame. **ML**

Announcing the Lone Star Region Virtual Museum

We are thrilled to announce the creation of a Lone Star Region (NMRA) Virtual Musem! This online museum will showcase the rich history and legacy of model railroading in the Lone Star Region, offering visitors an immersive experience into the evolution of our region.

You can expect to see member and club spotlights, virtual tours of historical model railroad layouts, historical events, exhibits that showcase the best of our members and milestones in the region -- basically the evolution of our region.

Stay tuned for updates on the official opening and access details for the museum. We are proud to announce that Gil and Virginia Freitag and the Stoney Creek and Western will be among the initial notables.

We have a small team of four that are working on this. So if you have any information that you believe should be a part of the virtual museum, please email that information to me.

Donna Orr
LSR President

Setting Up Operations on Small Switching Layouts

by Cliff Scherer

In the last issue we looked at how to participate in operating sessions (op sessions) and definitions of some of the terms used in op sessions. Let's build on those concepts and look at how you can start having great sessions on your layout – no matter how small it may be.

Operating sessions on model railroads are recreations of the operations on prototype railroads. To replicate these operations, you'll need to cover a few basics in your track plan. As we'll see later, these are easily covered by most shelf layouts and other types of switching layouts.

Figure 1: The west end of Seminole on the Sierra Central RR

A Case Study in Planning and Setting Up Operations on a Small Layout: Lou Adler's Sierra Central RR

One need look no further than Lou Adler's current layout for an exquisitely designed and executed small layout with great operations. There's a lot packed into this 11 1/2' x 2' space from excellent detail to engaging operating sessions.

Lou built the Sierra Central during the pandemic. While many of us were stuck at home, Lou spent his time building the layout you see in figure 1.

Before we get into operations on the Sierra Central, let's look at the layout itself and how it plays into the op sessions that Lou hosts.

The Sierra Central RR

Lou's starting point for the layout was to look for inspiration in a prototype railroad. In this case the starting point was a desire to model a desert town in New Mexico. This allowed

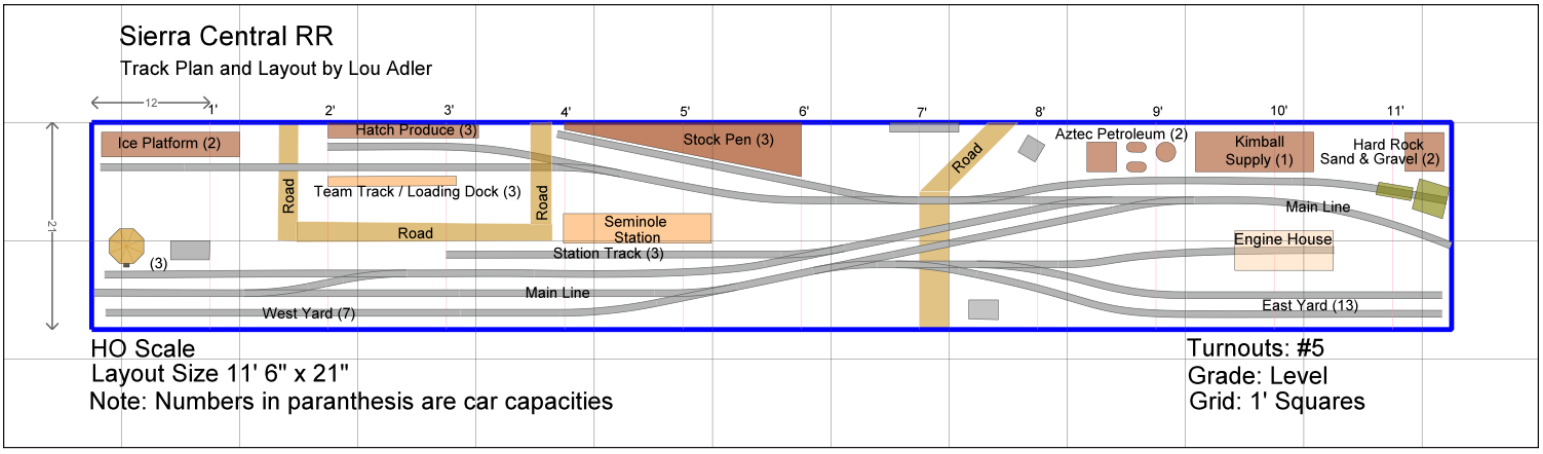


Figure 2: The Sierra Central RR Track Plan

Figure 3: Train #170 is on the main line headed toward Cloudcroft. Notice how the track curves to the right behind the engine house as opposed to paralleling the spur to the left.

Lou to utilize scenery that didn't involve grades which would be difficult on a small layout like this. He liked the area around Alamogordo, New Mexico so that became the starting point.

The layout loosely represents Alamogordo, New Mexico as it probably would have looked on September 15, 1955 – the specific date that Lou has modelled. There was a shortline, the Alamogordo & Sacramento Mountain Railway, running from the mountain area of Cloudcroft, NM west to Alamogordo. The A&SM was eventually acquired by the Southern Pacific. In Lou's interpretation of this area, the town of Seminole is modelled after Alamogordo and the shortline is the Sierra Central RR. Since there was no room to model the actual mountains and shortline, Lou specifies that the Sierra Central has a junction with the SP just east of Seminole – off the layout. Further, the SP has contracted with the Sierra Central to switch the town of Alamogordo. So, trains to and from Cloudcroft will enter and exit the right (east) end of the layout.

Once the inspiration and era were determined, Lou looked to the Internet for shelf layout track plans in this size range. He found one that loosely followed his vision. Lou then modified the plan to better represent a prototypical railroad town of this size. The design constraints of prototypical track arrangement and number of industry car spots versus yard car spots were considered in modifying the plan.

In altering the track plan, Lou also took into consideration several elements needed in a small switching layout where operating sessions will be conducted:

1. A way to introduce cars onto the layout such as a mainline coming in from the end of the layout or a staging track such as a removeable staging yard.
2. A run-around track.
3. Rail-served businesses that are logical for the are being modelled.
4. At least one yard track.
5. The track plan should be simple, but engaging (the prototype railroads designed for the least complex track arrangements that would still get the job done)

Figure 2 shows the final track plan. You can see how the elements above have been incorporated.

The finishing touches to the plan include additional elements that make it both more interesting and more engaging for operators. Some of these are listed below and should be considered in your switching layout design:

Figure 4: Jackobs Used Car Lot provides a non-rail detail scene that helps to tie the layout to the real world. You can just make out the checkers game going on behind the office. (Photo: Lou Adler)

Figure 5: The icing platform is on the left and Hatch Produce is in the center. The reefer at the icing platform will need to go to Hatch for loading but note there are boxcars in the way on the team track. These cannot be moved if they are in the loading/unloading process as indicated by special instructions that Lou provides to the crew.

- The mainline enters from the right in a diagonal tangent relative to the layout edge, flowing into a slight curve. It's tempting to lay all track in parallel on small switching layouts, but that makes the layout look smaller and less interesting (see figure 3).
- Some rail-served businesses share the same spur track, which is prototypical and provides operating interest.
- The layout is full of detail beyond just railroad-related items. For example, there is a checkers game going on near the used car dealer, an occupied stall in the depot outhouse, and a raucous scene at the Minute Maid ice cream stand among other mini scenes. All of this gives the feel of a larger layout and helps to tie the layout to the real world (see figure 4).
- Two complementary industries are included: the ice plant is used to ice reefers that then must be moved to Hatch Produce for loading (see figure 5).
- Engine service facilities provide both visual and operating interest (see figure 6).
- The track is laid close to the base layout grade rather than on ¼" high roadbed. This is much more interesting and prototypical for an industrial area or a small town.

Structure of an Operating Session on the Sierra Central

The Sierra Central operates up to 4 trains in 2 sessions per operating day. Let's look at session 1 (S-1) specifically. In S-1 there are 2 trains, #169 is arriving from Cloudcroft as the session begins and # 170 will be ready to leave for Cloudcroft at the end of the session. These 2 trains are mixed, meaning that they are hauling both freight cars and passengers in either a coach or a passenger caboose.

A typical operating session on the Sierra Central involves a single crew consisting of 2 crew members: an engineer and a conductor/brakeman. The session will take an average crew about 2 to 2 ½ hours to complete.

At the beginning of an op session, the crew is handed a throttle and assumes control of train #169 as it is just entering Seminole from the east. To be clear, this train is stationary at that point, having been staged on the right end of the main line by hand before the crew arrives. The crew will bring it into Seminole as they take control. As the train arrives in Seminole, the conductor is handed paperwork for their time in Seminole. The paperwork consists of prototypical waybills, consist lists for train #169 and #170, work instructions and

Figure 6: The engine house lead contains engine service facilities providing interest and more work for the crew as they may need to stop for refueling, sand, and radiator water for their Alco RS-1.

Figure 7: The Sierra Central operates with a 2-man crew. Here engineer Joe Dumas is bringing the SP RS-1 #5498 out of the east yard while conductor John Larson looks on.

special instructions. (See figures 8 & 9)

Separate car cards are not needed as Lou prints the waybills for each operating session including car identification directly on the waybill which is prototypical of a shipper's waybill. We'll cover how the waybills are created shortly.

Once the train is brought into Seminole the crew will need to spot the passenger car/passenger caboose at the depot so passengers can disembark. Then they will pick up their paperwork. At this point there are decisions to be made around how to proceed with their assignments. They have the choice of immediately beginning work or having the conductor take time to create a switch list. Lou provides a blank switch list form for this purpose.

Creating a switch list is a great way to stay organized during the operating session and is prototypical. The switch list simply provides a recap of the car moves indicated by the waybills. Instead of constantly looking through multiple waybills to plan moves, the conductor can simply refer to the switch list as the crew moves through the work to be done. The tradeoff is that it takes time to write up the switch list. An experienced crew may want to skip this and just work off the waybills. Lou leaves it up to the crew.

Car Forwarding and Generating Waybills

Up to now we've talked about layout design and how the crew will work, but before the crew ever shows up, Lou must organize the car movements and generate the waybills.

Car movements are the rotations of cars usually through multiple operating sessions. A car rotation is simply the logical

J-62-S1 Form 1304

721 SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY 721

EMPTY CAR BILL

CAR INITIAL	CAR NUMBER
DRX	6969
AAR CLASS	LENGTH/CAPY
T	

FOR HOME

Billed from SEMINOLE N.MEX

To or Via EL PASO TEX SP R.R.

Pick up at AZTEC PETROL Spot WEST YARD

FOR LOADING

Billed from

To

Shipper Spot

INSTRUCTIONS-This form must accompany all empty foreign cars, and System empty cars intended for loading, and must be used in billing private line cars under General Order Ten.

J-61-S1 L-700-N

721 SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY 721

FREIGHT WAYBILL

TO BE USED FOR SINGLE CONSIGNMENTS, CAR LOAD AND LESS CARLOAD

CAR INITIAL	CAR NUMBER
SP	62815
ARR CLASS OF CAR ORDERED: T	LENGTH/CAPY OF CAR
TO STATION STATE: SEMINOLE N.MEX	FROM STATION STATE: BEAUMONT TEX
CONSIGNEE AND ADDRESS: AZTEC PETROLEUM CO	SHIPPER: TEXACO DANGEROUS 1172
ROUTE Show in route order: T&NO-ELP-SP	Indicate how weights were obtained for L.C.L. Shipments only. E-Estimated S-Shippers Tared Wtr R-Railroad Scale T-Tariff; STOP THIS CAR AT
ON C.L. TRAFFIC-INSTRUCTIONS (Regarding Icing, Ventilation, Etc.) & EXCEPTIONS	Pull from West Yard
NO. PKGS.	DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLES
3907 GAL	FUEL OIL DANGEROUS

SCRR-S1 L-700-N

127 SIERRA CENTRAL RAILROAD 127

FREIGHT WAYBILL

TO BE USED FOR SINGLE CONSIGNMENTS, CAR LOAD AND LESS CARLOAD

CAR INITIAL	CAR NUMBER
SC	647
ARR CLASS OF CAR ORDERED: T	LENGTH/CAPY OF CAR
TO STATION STATE: SEMINOLE N.MEX	FROM STATION STATE: CLOUDCRFT N.MEX
CONSIGNEE AND ADDRESS: SOUTHERN PACIFIC RR	SHIPPER: SOUTHERN PACIFIC RR
ROUTE Show in route order: SC	Indicate how weights were obtained for L.C.L. Shipments only. E-Estimated S-Shippers Tared Wtr R-Railroad Scale T-Tariff; STOP THIS CAR AT
ON C.L. TRAFFIC-INSTRUCTIONS (Regarding Icing, Ventilation, Etc.) & EXCEPTIONS	Spot at water tower
NO. PKGS.	DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLES
3424 GAL	WATER

Figure 8: Empty car bill and waybill examples

SCRR-S1 S-24-C1

Sierra Central Railroad

CONSIST LIST

To C&E At Cloudcroft Sept 15 19 55

Train	Engine No.	Time
169		8:00 A M.

Initials	No.	Kind	Contents	Destination	Spot at
SC	647	T	WATER	SEMINOLE N.MEX	WATER TOWER
NMB	409	XE	24 PKGS-LCL	SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK
TCW	2	CAB		SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK

Operating Reminders:
Set out consist before starting local switching
See consist list for departing train #170.
Leave switch points lined to mainline.
DO NOT USE STOCK PEN FOR OFF-SPOTS.

SCCR-S1 SC-14-1

Sierra Central Railroad

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Station Seminole Sept 15 19 55

Remarks

To Local Switcher

Spot WP S 75547
for loading after working stock pens

LSA

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Figure 9: Consist list and special instructions examples

movement of the car from location to location. For example, on Lou's layout a tank car might be a load in the east yard that was dropped by an SP freight. It might next be moved to Aztec Petroleum for unloading. Then moved back to the yard as an empty. Then a virtual move takes place when the car is imagined to have been picked up by an SP freight, delivered to a distant refinery for loading and returned to Seminole as a load by another SP freight. Our rotation on the Seminole Central then resumes all over again. On many model railroads this tank car rotation is handled by multi-sided waybills placed in car card pockets.

Lou has set up a nice system that does away with the need for separate car cards and multi-sided non-prototypical waybills. The Sierra Central organizes the car movements using a spreadsheet, which generates prototypical waybills and empty car bills. The spreadsheet uses multiple worksheets with separate sheets covering:

1. Rolling Stock Roster
2. Engine Roster
3. Notes and maintenance records

Cycle ID	Reporting Marks			Weight	Load	From	Pick-up at	To	Spot at	Notes	
Flat Cars	SC	532	FB	1128 CU FT	LUMBER	EAST YARD	TRK 2	TEAM TRACK	LOAD DOCK	J-61-S2	CHECK WAY BILLS B4 PRI
	SP	506318	FB	38,684 LBS	ANODES	TEAM TRACK		EAST YARD	TRK 1	J-62-S1	ROTATE WEIGHT & NOTE S
3	PRR	474891	F		MTY	EAST YARD	TRK 1	CORTEZ TRNSFR		J-60-S2	Use Conductor's Mem
Gons	SP	151468	G	45,700 LBS	ROCKS	WEST YARD		HARD ROCK	DUMP PIT	MP-55-S1	Gons rotated for AUG20
2	ATSF	83193	G		MTY	HARD ROCK		WEST YARD		CRI&P-S1	SP 46109 & 151468 on la

Cycle ID	Reporting Marks			Vol./Wt.	Load	From	Pick-up at	To	Spot at	Notes	
Tank Cars	SP	62815	T	3907 GAL	FUEL OIL	WEST YARD		AZTEC PETROL		J-61-S1	
	COSX	931	T	80,000 LBS	FUEL OIL	AZTEC PETROL		AZTEC PETROL		DELAY	
	DRX	6969	T		MTY	AZTEC PETROL		WEST YARD		J-62-S1	
	SC	647	T	3424 GAL	WATER	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX	#169	SEMINOLE N.MEX	WATER TOWER	J-61-S1	TRAIN #169
5	SC	647	T		MTY	SEMINOLE N.MEX	WATER TOWER	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX	#170	SCRR-S1	TRAIN #170

Cycle ID	Reporting Marks			From	Pick-up at	To	Spot at	Notes	
Passenger Cars	TCW	2	CAB	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX		SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK	S1	TRAIN #170
Mar-Apr; Oct-Nov	SC	31	CAB	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX		SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK	S2	TRAIN #172
Dec-Feb; May-Sept	TCW	2	CAB	SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX		S1	TRAIN #169
	SC	31	CAB	SEMINOLE N.MEX	STATION TRACK	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX		S2	TRAIN #171

Total Frt Cars = 33

ROUTING
ELP - EL PASO
MEM, STL via TUC
CHI, KC via TUC

YARD CAPACITY	
LOCATION	CAR COUNT
West Yard	6
East Yard Trk 1	5
East Yard Trk 2	4
Total	15

COPY/PASTE AS REQUIRED DEPENDING ON MONTH

TOURIST	TCW	2	CAB
OFF SEASON	SC	31	CAB
Mar-Apr;	TCW	2	CAB
Oct.-Nov.	SC	31	CAB
TOURIST	ATSF	1413	CHAIR
IN SEASON	SC	31	CAB

TOURIST SEASON
OFF SEASON: March-April; October-November
IN SEASON: May-September; December-February

Cycles | Track Maintenance | Empty Car Bill R&S | SWITCH CAR R (IN) | Switch Car R (OFF) | Empty Car Bill G&XM | Empty Car Bill G,H&T

Figure 10: The Sierra Central operations are managed by an Excel spreadsheet using multiple worksheets for different functions. The CYCLES worksheet is shown here.

Cycle ID	Reporting Marks			Vol./Wt.	Load	From	Pick-up at	To	Spot at	Notes	
Tank Cars	SP	62815	T	3907 GAL	FUEL OIL	WEST YARD		AZTEC PETROL		J-61-S1	
	COSX	931	T	80,000 LBS	FUEL OIL	AZTEC PETROL		AZTEC PETROL		DELAY	
	DRX	6969	T		MTY	AZTEC PETROL		WEST YARD		J-62-S1	
	SC	647	T	3424 GAL	WATER	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX	#169	SEMINOLE N.MEX	WATER TOWER	J-61-S1	TRAIN #169
5	SC	647	T		MTY	SEMINOLE N.MEX	WATER TOWER	CLOUDCRFT N.MEX	#170	SCRR-S1	TRAIN #170

Figure 11: The tank car section of the CYCLES worksheet

4. The CYCLES worksheet, which manages the rotation of car movements
5. Waybill templates, empty car bill templates, work instructions and special instructions templates.

The core of the spreadsheet is the CYCLES worksheet. CYCLES is organized by car type and further by each available car of that type. CYCLES provides the car rotations by showing where the car is at the beginning of the session and where it will go during the session. The rotation on the worksheet occurs when Lou updates it for the car's new location after a session is complete.

The spreadsheet is configured with waybills on subsequent worksheets that are populated with the data from the CYCLES worksheet. This is done by linking cells in the waybill templates to the corresponding cell in the CYCLES worksheet. These waybills are printed 4 to a page and easily cut into individual waybills.

To demonstrate the spreadsheet in use, let's take tank cars as an example. (See figure 11) Lou has 2 spots available at Aztec Petroleum and one spot at the water tank for a water tank car. At the beginning of an op session there are 2 petroleum tank cars taking up both spots at Aztec, COSX 931 and DRX 6969. The spreadsheet shows that COSX 931 is not being pulled (note that the FROM and TO columns are the same for this car and DELAY is shown in the NOTES column. Further, the spreadsheet shows that SP 62815 is in West Yard and needs to be spotted at Aztec, while DRX 6969 is at Aztec and needs to be spotted in West Yard. The spreadsheet will automatically print waybills indicating these 2 moves for the crew. These waybills are shown in the examples in figure 8.

The water tank car, SC 647 is part of train #169 which the crew is bringing in. This car will be spotted at the water tower by the crew and unloaded while they are switching other cars. At the end of the session, the crew will pull this now empty water car and add it to train #170 for return to Cloudcroft. This is communicated to the crew by waybills just like the Petroleum tank cars, and also on the Consist Lists for the 2 trains.

At the end of this op session, each car should be at the TO location shown in CYCLES. At this point, Lou will manually copy and paste the cars in the CYCLES worksheet so that they matches where they are on the layout (basically rotating the car in the spreadsheet to match its physical location, which is in the FROM column). This preps the spreadsheet for the next operating session.

Lou introduces a bit more complexity with a 2nd op session in the afternoon. This session builds on the first and requires another update of the spreadsheet. Note that the session number for car moves is indicated in the NOTES column. S-1 is session 1, S-2 is session 2 and DELAY means the car should remain where it is (presumably because it has yet to be loaded).

Lou also factored in time to work the op session. His goal was for a session to last about 2 hours. By using the spreadsheet, Lou can manipulate how many cars get switched in each session and therefore, how long the session should take. Operating challenges can be introduced with cars that are shown in DELAY because they will often be in

Figure 12: Train 169 will need to spot the water take car at the tower, but the flat car, which is on DELAY, will be an obstacle to deal with. (Photo: Lou Adler)

Figure 13: On the upper spur track there are three industries: Aztec Petroleum, Kimball Supply, and Hard Rock. Switching these takes a little planning and must consider whether a car is actively being loaded/unloaded. You will be sorry if you try to move one of those take cars while it's being unloaded.

the way of other work. They may require the crew to move them temporarily. All of these variables come together to create interest and also manipulate the time it takes to work a session.

Car Capacity and Optimal Number of Cars on the Layout

In designing operating sessions, one concern is how to determine the number of cars that should be on the layout at any one time. Too many cars will result in gridlock making the Op sessions frustrating. Too few cars means the crew will not be challenged and will run out of work too soon.

Total car capacity is determined by counting the available car spots at rail-served businesses and available spots on yard tracks. It helps if the industry spots and yard spots are roughly equal in number. On Lou's layout there are 22 spots for cars at rail-served businesses or on non-yard spur tracks, and 20 spots on yard tracks. At any one time the the Sierra Central has has 33 cars on it giving some room to switch cars as needed. Lou came up with 33 cars based the number of industry spots available, on the logical car forwarding rotations, and on the time it takes an average crew to complete work in 2-2 ½ hours. He introduced prototypical variances such as cars that are at industry sidings but are on "DELAY" meaning they stay there through an op session presumably because they have not yet been loaded/unloaded (see figure 12). Cars on the yard tracks are presumed to be there because they were either dropped by an SP freight or are awaiting pickup by an SP freight passing through Seminole.

Figure 14: What's the problem here? The tank cars have been left on the main line with an inbound train approaching. (Photo: Lou Adler)

Creating Operating Details to Challenge Operators

Lou has designed an excellent operations plan by adding prototypical details to the work. These range from the detail on waybills to special instructions to the crew.

A crew that is tasked with simply spotting a few cars at trailing point switches will not feel very challenged. A crew that must deal with real world situations will need to think a bit more about how to proceed – it's one thing that makes operations fun. Here are some of the situations that Lou has introduced to challenge crews prototypically without making the session feel tedious:

- Industry spots on both trailing and facing point switches.
- Multiple industries on a single spur track (See figure 13).
- The main line needs to remain clear, not used other than for run-around moves (see figure 14).
- The need to spot the passenger car at the station and waiting for passengers to disembark before it can be moved to clear the track for switching.
- Cars that are spotted on the Team Track must be given time to load/unload before they can be cleared to give access to the icing platform.
- The stock yard has special instructions such as the requirement to leave a specified car at the loading chute and not shuffling loaded stock cars unnecessarily.

Any small layout can host an operating session if thought is given to how the prototype works, what logical car moves should take place, and with a way to introduce cars to the layout. Introduction of cars can happen via a staging track, or by simply staging an inbound train on the mainline, or by using cars staged on yard track(s).

Some imagination will provide for cars to enter and leave the layout via the main line virtually, just as Lou's layout has trains "arriving" from and "departing" to Cloudcroft. The use of a spreadsheet to track car forwarding or some other means such as 4 cycle car cards/waybills is a matter of personal preference. Lou's system is nicely organized and quite a joy to experience. **ML**

Figure 15: At the end of the session, Train #170 heads out from Seminole toward Cloudcroft on the Sierra Central RR - a small switching layout designed for operations.

RRRduino...

by Kelly Russell and Speed Muller (photo by Kelly Russell)

Church Bells Ringing!

A friend of mine and I were looking through his vast collection of unbuilt structure kits looking to add some buildings to the new Eastside extension of my layout. Several kits were selected and then we found a small church kit by Pola. We agreed that it would make an excellent addition. Then he added, "if it would chime the hour, that would really make it interesting. And if the front door would open and people came in and out…" I gave him the "look", and took the kit.

In the next weeks I built the church, laid track and built other structures, but the thought of making the church chime kept circulating in my mind…I thought "how about a choir singing"… still thinking, "I'll bet that would make a good Arduino application"… So I turned to the Arduino Guru (Speed) with the question of adding sound. He returned to me his clinic that he presented in St. Louis on adding an SD card MP3 player. COOL!

Parts were ordered, breadboard was built up, code was modified and now the bells in the little church tower sound off on the "hour" and the choir sings gloriously several times per "day". The length of an "hour" is parameter driven, and the volume is controlled through the use of a push button. The code was refined to remove some of the code Speed added for the functionality of the DFReader and we present it here. The next version (4.0) makes the interior lighting follow a 24 hour clock. Don't tell Speed I said this, but Arduinos are pretty cool.

Version 5.0, church door opening and closing? Tell us what ideas you have!

-Kelly Russell

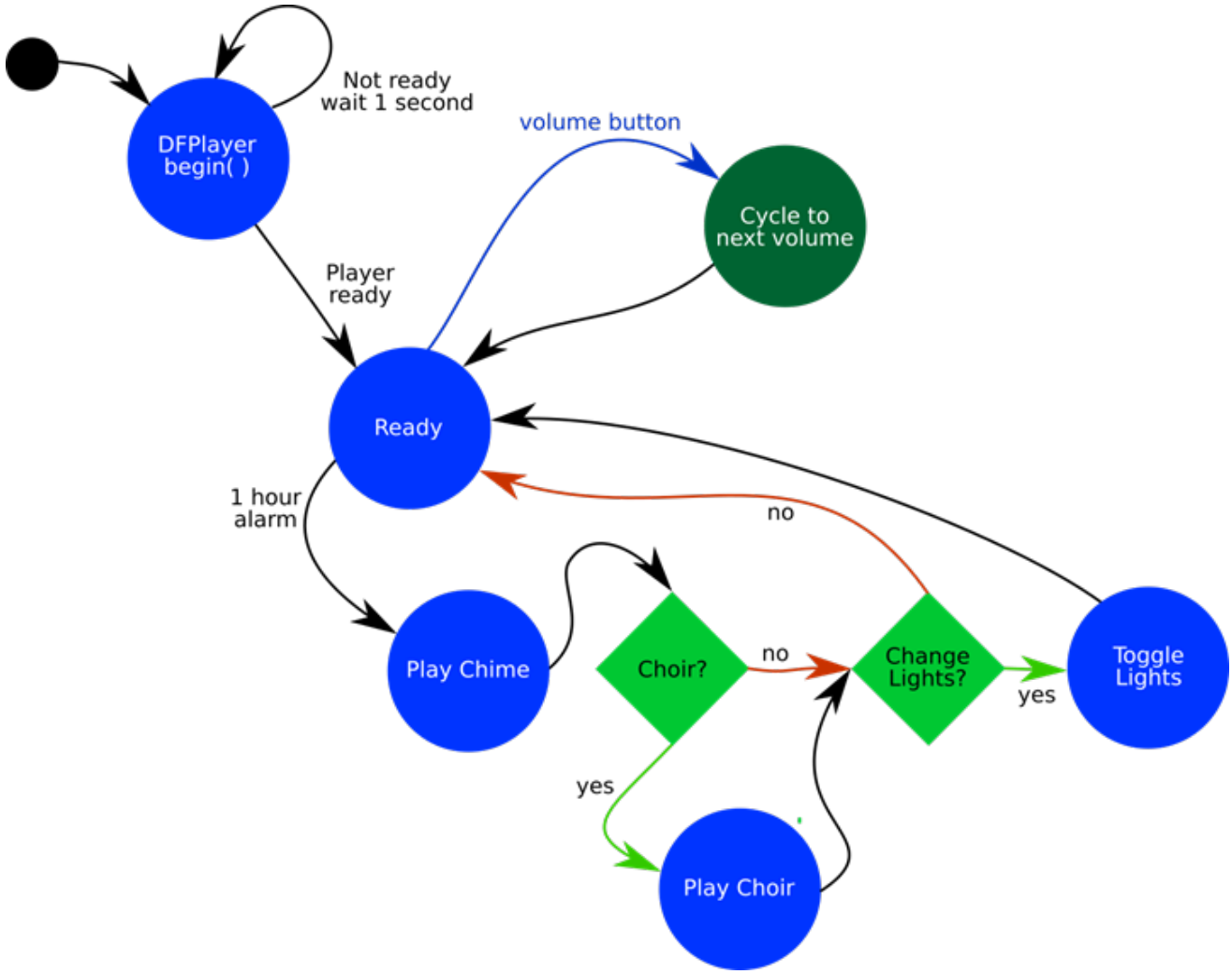
Back to Speed:

The modified "state diagram" for the code that follows is shown on the next page. The Arduino spends most of its time waiting for the next "hour" alarm to play the music and the bells to indicate the "hour", and then some choir music if needed, and of course, shall the lights be turned on, since it is 2 pm, or off, since it is 10 pm. And then straight back to waiting again. Unless you press the volume button, upon which the code would cycle to the next value and loop between LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH and MUTE.

Initialize the DFPlayer and then wait for a button press or for the next hour to strike!

The only notes about the code is that we need further work on avoiding the delays, but since the church music is currently doing nothing other than playing either the bell or the choir music, the trouble is not THAT severe, except that the heartbeat is paused during all the delay( ) calls.

Every *x* number of seconds, set it to match your fast clock, the timer will say enough time has expired, it is the next hour. So the church bells will play and make the number of bells at the end to match the hour. This is all included in the 0001.mp3 to 0012.mp3 on the micro SD card inserted into the DFPlayer. In the choir array (`u8ChoirSong[13]`) is a value bigger than 12, if you need a choir song to be played during that "hour". Make sure there are enough files on your micro SD card to do this with. We have 13 values in the array to avoid dealing with the zeroth hour. Last note, if you have a genuine DFPlayer, then you can use the real `myDFPlayer.play( u8Track );` function, else, you are stuck with stopping the player and fast forwarding to the correct



track with the `myDFPlayer.next( )` function, before we call play. Both functions are included.

The wiring diagram for the Arduino and the DFPlayer (https://a.co/d/cyacvRz) is in the St Louis RRRduino clinic documentation, shown here: https://github.com/nambabwe/other/blob/master/RRRduino_Clinic_StLouis_2022/2022.08.09_TheStLouisRRRduinoClinic.pdf on page 51. Then add the volume button between the Arduino's D8 pin and GND. And the LEDs with resistors for the church goes from D11 to GND and the church tower from D10 to GND.

And here is the code, comments included:

```
#define VERSION_STR "ChurchBells, ver 4.00, 2024.10.29"

/*
 * Play church bells and choir music with a DFMiniPlayer
 *
 * Code used from https://starthardware.org/en/dfplayer-mini-mp3-player-for-arduino/
 * StartHardware by Stefan Hermann Code used from
 * https://github.com/nambabwe/other/tree/master/RRRduino_Clinic_StLouis_2022/Code/008_Sound_with_Menu
 * Author: Gert 'Speed' Muller, 2022.08.09
 *
 * Modifications for driving church sounds: Kelly Russell, 2024.10.29
      V1 Original Speed Software
      V2 Addition of hourly bell tolling
      V3 Removal of DFReader functionality code
      V4 Addition of light cycle on 12 hour clock
 */

#include "DFRobotDFPlayerMini.h"     // Library of functions for the DFReader
#include "SoftwareSerial.h"          // Serial interface for DFReader commands
#include "Heartbeat.h"               // Speed's led flashing routine
```

```
// define constants
#define BAUDRATE               57600    // set Baud Rate in Serial Monitor to this value
#define DFPLAYER_BAUDRATE       9600

#define LEDPIN                    13
#define SWRXPIN                    2    // Wire from pin 2 to RX pin on DFReader - include a 1k resistor
#define SWTXPIN                    3    // Wire from pin 3 to TX pin on DFReader - include a 1k resistor

#define VOLBUTTON                 A1    // Push button for Volume control - button between GND and A1

#define TOWERLIGHTPIN             10    // LED and resistor to church tower light
#define CHURCHLIGHTPIN            11    // LED and resistor to church lights
#define HEARTPIN1                 13    // Built-in LED for software to show heartbeat
#define TIMEOFF                  617    // Heartbeat off time
#define TIMEON                    50    // Heartbeat on time

/* How often the bells will toll in milliseconds
   every hour setting would be 3,600,000
   1 minute   60,000
   3 min     180,000
   5 min     300,000
   will finally set to 15 minutes = 900,000 (4:1 fast clock)
*/
#define NEXTPLAYTIME       300000

// define objects
SoftwareSerial mySoftwareSerial( SWRXPIN, SWTXPIN );
  // Software serial port to RX pin and TX pin to DFPlayer
DFRobotDFPlayerMini myDFPlayer;
Heartbeat myHeart = Heartbeat( HEARTPIN1, TIMEON, TIMEOFF );

// define variables
bool bNotReady = true;
int16_t i16CurrentFile = 1;        // Which file to play
unsigned long ulPreviousTime =  0; // Previous time the bells tolled
uint8_t u8TollHour           =  1; // Iteration through the tolling cycle (the o'clock if you will)

// When the push button is pressed code will cycle to next volume
// LOW=8, MED=14, HI=26 and MUTE=0, settings in variables below
uint8_t u8VolButtonStatus    =  0;
uint8_t u8VolButtonState     =  0;
uint8_t u8PrevVolButtonState =  0;
uint8_t u8VolButtonCtr       =  0;
const uint8_t u8VOLMUTE      =  0;
const uint8_t u8VOLLOW       =  8;
const uint8_t u8VOLMED       = 15;
const uint8_t u8VOLHI        = 26;

uint8_t u8Volume = 8;          // Initial = 2/3rd of max, change this to a value you like
uint8_t u8IncomingByte;

// Choir songs variables, index is the hour to play Choir track (value) in:
uint8_t u8ChoirSong[13] = { 0, 0, 13, 14, 0, 0, 0, 15, 16, 0, 0, 0, 0 };

// Church light settings
uint8_t TowerBrightPWM  = 15;  // Value for brightness level of Tower LED (0-255)
uint8_t ChurchBrightPWM = 50;  // Value for brightness level of Church LED's  (0-255)


// setup( ) called once from main.cpp
void setup( ) {
  mySoftwareSerial.begin( DFPLAYER_BAUDRATE ); // DFPlayer default baud rate
  Serial.begin( BAUDRATE );                    // PC baud rate, (Ctrl+Shift+M)
  delay( 100 );
```

```
  myHeart.begin( );

  pinMode( VOLBUTTON, INPUT_PULLUP );            // Setup the volume push button

  Serial.println( );
  Serial.println( VERSION_STR );

  while( bNotReady ) {
    if( !myDFPlayer.begin( mySoftwareSerial ) ) { // Use softwareSerial to communicate with mp3
      Serial.println( "DFPlayer begin( ) failed:" );
      Serial.println( "Check the wiring and/or insert a uSD card" );
      bNotReady = true;
      delay( 1000 );                             // Wait 1 second to try again
    } else {
      bNotReady = false;
    } // if ready
  } // while

  Serial.println( "DFPlayer ready!" );
  delay( 100 );

  setMP3Volume( u8Volume );               // Set initial volume
  delay( 500 );

  myDFPlayer.start( );                    // Play the first file to verify player settings at initiation
  playTrackNum( 1 );
  ulPreviousTime = 0;

  // Setup LED Pins
  pinMode( TOWERLIGHTPIN, OUTPUT );
  pinMode( CHURCHLIGHTPIN, OUTPUT );

  //  Turn lights on as test
  analogWrite( TOWERLIGHTPIN, TowerBrightPWM );
  analogWrite( CHURCHLIGHTPIN, ChurchBrightPWM );

  delay( 2000 ); // 2 seconds to see the lights on

  // Turn Lights off
  analogWrite( TOWERLIGHTPIN, 0 );
  analogWrite( CHURCHLIGHTPIN, 0 );

  Serial.println( "Starting up!" );        // Remember that a track might already be playing
} // end of setup( )


// Check if the button is pressed to, and then change the volume
void UpdateVolume( ) {
  uint8_t u8VolButtonState = digitalRead( VOLBUTTON ); // read the input pin

  if( u8VolButtonState < 1 ) {        // if ButtonState = 0 (button is depressed)
    if( u8PrevVolButtonState == 1 ) { // if PrevVolButtonState = 1
      u8PrevVolButtonState = 3;       // Set PrevVolState to 3 to flag that the button was depressed first
                                      // read of 0
    } // if
  } else {                            // if VolButtonState > 0: button is not depressed
    if( u8PrevVolButtonState > 2 ) {  // if PrevVolButtonState = 3: is this the first not depressed read
                                      // after a depression read?
      u8VolButtonStatus = 1;          // Set u8VolButtonStatus to 1: to indicate that the button was
                                      // pushed once no matter how long
      u8PrevVolButtonState = 1;
    } else {
      u8PrevVolButtonState = 1;       // Set u8PrevVolButtonState to 1, save the non depressed state
    } // if
  } // if
```

```
  if( u8VolButtonStatus > 0 ) {       // Was the status set above
    u8VolButtonCtr++;                 // Increase the number of Vol button pushes
    u8VolButtonStatus = 0;            // Clear the Vol Button Status after counting
    if( u8VolButtonCtr > 3 ) {
      u8VolButtonCtr = 0;
      u8Volume = u8VOLMUTE;
      Serial.println( "  Set Volume to MUTE" );
    } else {
      if( u8VolButtonCtr > 2 ) {
        u8Volume = u8VOLHI;
        Serial.println( "  Set Volume to HI" );
      } else {
        if( u8VolButtonCtr > 1 ) {
          u8Volume = u8VOLMED;
          Serial.println( "  Set Volume to MED" );
        } else {
          if( u8VolButtonCtr > 0 ) {
            u8Volume = u8VOLLOW;
            Serial.println( "  Set Volume to LOW" );
          } // if LOW
        } // if MED
      } // if HI
    } // if MUTE
    setMP3Volume( u8Volume );
  } // if status set
} // void UpdateVolume( )


// Set the MP3's volume by increasing or decreasing the value until it matches
void setMP3Volume( uint8_t u8TheVolume ) {
  if( u8TheVolume < 31 ) {
    uint8_t u8CurrentVolume = myDFPlayer.readVolume( );
    while( u8CurrentVolume != u8TheVolume ) {
      if( u8CurrentVolume > u8TheVolume ) {
        myDFPlayer.volumeDown( ); // Volume Down
      } else {
        if( u8CurrentVolume < u8TheVolume ) {
          myDFPlayer.volumeUp( ); // Volume Up
        } // if less
      } // if else
      delay( 10 );
      u8CurrentVolume = myDFPlayer.readVolume( );
    } // while
  } // if valid volume
} // void setMP3Volume( uint8_t )


/*
 * We start and stop until we are at the track, then we don't stop.
 * For use on a knock-off DFPlayer
 */
void playTrackNum( uint8_t u8Track ) {
  Serial.print( "Playing track: " ); Serial.println( u8Track );
  myDFPlayer.stop( );
  if( u8Track > 0 ) {
    myDFPlayer.start( );
    if( u8Track > 1 ) {
      for( uint8_t u8i=1; u8i < u8Track; ++u8i ) {
        myDFPlayer.stop( );
        delay( 50 );
        myDFPlayer.next( );
```

```
      } // for
    } // if > 1
  } // if > 0
} // void playTrackNum( uint8_t )


// Play track number on a genuine DFPlayer
void playTrackNumDFP( uint8_t u8Track ) { // Play the track number passed
  myDFPlayer.play( u8Track );
} // void playTrackNum( uint8_t )


// Repeat over and over and over, until power off or reset is held
void loop( ) {
  myHeart.update( );
  UpdateVolume( ); // Process any button pushes to update the volume

  unsigned long ulCurrentTime = millis( );

  if( ulCurrentTime - ulPreviousTime > NEXTPLAYTIME ) { // Time to play
    ulPreviousTime = ulCurrentTime;
    i16CurrentFile = u8TollHour;

    // Turn on Bell Tower LED
    analogWrite( TOWERLIGHTPIN, TowerBrightPWM );

    // Church lights on between 2 pm and 10 pm
    if( u8TollHour > 1 && u8TollHour < 11 ) {
      analogWrite( CHURCHLIGHTPIN, ChurchBrightPWM );
    } else {
      analogWrite( CHURCHLIGHTPIN, 0 );
    } // if lights on

    Serial.print( "Bell: " ); Serial.println( i16CurrentFile );
    playTrackNum( i16CurrentFile );
    delay( 30000 ); // Give 30 seconds to play bell tolls before starting choir song, if needed
                    // But nothing else can happen during this wait time <-- Future article will fix this!

    analogWrite( TOWERLIGHTPIN, 0 ); // Turn off Tower Light

    // Play choir song if Choir_song array entry shows a file #
    if( u8ChoirSong[u8TollHour] > 0 ) {
      i16CurrentFile = u8ChoirSong[u8TollHour];
      playTrackNum( i16CurrentFile ); // Most tracks are just over 2 min each
    } // if need to play song

    u8TollHour++; // Increment Toll Hour to get setup for next tolling
    if( u8TollHour > 12 ) {
      u8TollHour = 1;
    } // if > 12
  } // if time

} // end of loop( )
```

Questions are welcome, any time!
Speed Muller **ML**

Historian's Corner

Our Lone Star Region Heritage

by Bob Barnett, MMR

The Birthplace of the LSR

Near the location where US 290 and Texas 105 cross the Brazos and you enter Washington County is two large stone monument signs with raised letters the read: "Welcome to Washington County - The Birthplace of Texas". If we were willing to raise the funds the LSR could erect such a sign near the borders of the City of Dallas.

In earlier articles I have discussed how the Lone Star Region came into existence. Signatures were collected at Hall's Hobby Shop on a petition to the NMRA for creating a new region (later became the Lone Star Region). In the late summer of 1950 Bill McClanahan, Buddy Hall and Bobbie Hall attended the NMRA convention and Bill McClanahan officially presented the petition to form a new region. Wasting no time the Dallas area modelers put together an "Organizational Meeting" at the Baker Hotel in Dallas April 1951. The Fort Worth modelers quickly volunteered to host the first annual convention to be held in the fall of 1951.

I didn't really know how much Dallas contributed to the early growth of the LSR until recently when Bob Dobrowolsky, a fellow Houston Area Live Steamer and NMRA member, was "cleaning house" and presented me with a copy of the NMRA Yearbook and Pike Registry as published in 1951 and the NMRA "Official Guide of Model Railroads" for 1956. I looked through these searching for some of the contemporary well known railroads and modelers, particularly Bill McClanahan and Cliff Robinson. When I searched by cities and counties I was surprised to find the information in the table to the right. (The definition of and populations of Metropolitan areas gets very murky, in particular for Dallas. Since the 1970's Dallas-Fort Worth and surrounding cities have been combined into the Metroplex. Prior to that it was the opinion of the writer or researcher.)

It appears there was some real or implied "Peer Pressure" in Dallas to join the NMRA and the newly formed Lone Star Region. To be fair, Texas is a Big Place and word had probably not spread very evenly about the new region. The rest of the LSR would soon begin to catch up. Waco would host the second LSR convention. Houston would go on to host the third LSR convention in 1953 and the NMRA National in 1957. Austin which had zero members in 1951 would go on to hold the Austin Jamborees for years in the 1970's and 1980's and later the Austin Train Shows. The Austin, Round Rock and Temple area would host several LSR Conventions in 1988 and the 2000-2022 era. San Antonio was a popular spot for LSR conventions in the 1970's thru the early 2000's.

Texarkana is the biggest surprise. Far down the ranking in cities by population, Texarkana had the second most LSR members for a single city. There was a large club in Texarkana which was a 100% NMRA club for a time. The club consisted of mostly O-scalers and actually secured permission to construct an O-scale layout in Texarkana Union Station. How far they got on the layout and how long it lasted in still not clear. We will try to research and report back later on the progress of the Texarkana Club's Union Station Layout.

So, the next time you cross the County Line or City Limits of Dallas give a thought to the early model railroaders from Big D who got the ball rolling for the Lone Star Region. **ML**

City	NMRA Members	1950 Population	Texas City Rank
Dallas	97	434,467	1
Metro Area	102	614,799	
Houston	22	596,163	2
Metro Area	30	806,700	
San Antonio	18	408,422	3
Metro Area		500,460	
Fort Worth	20	278,778	4
Texarkana (and Ark.)	23	48,169	
Waco	8	84,706	
Austin	0	132,459	5

STATION No.VI

2025 NMRA

Novi, MI

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

2025 NMRA National Convention

July 14-19, 2024 - Novi, Michigan

www.nmra2025.org

Make plans now to join us in Novi, just outside Detroit, for maximum model railroad fun! We are planning a convention like no other, with highlights that include:

Suburban Sheraton with Free Parking - 50+ Resturants Within 15 Minutes
Operating Sessions on 20+ Layouts - Model Contest & Showcase - 60+ Layouts to Visit
Over 200 Clinics including Modeling with the Masters
Unique and Amazing Prototype and General Interest Tours
"Yard Sale" - Friday Night Pizza Party - Saturday Night Banquet - National Train Show
SIG Events - and more - at the lowest possible inclusive entry costs!

NORTH CENTRAL REGION NMRA

Register Today!

Open to ALL model railroaders -
You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend!

nmra.org

Registration is **Open** at BluesExpress2025.com

The 2025 Lone Star Region Convention will be held in held in Southern Louisiana for the first time in thirty years and you won't want to miss it! There will be layout and other railroading opportunities you've probably never seen, in a region rich with interesting and exciting sights. (And food!)

June 26 - 29, 2025

Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South
9900 Airline Highway
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

Visit BluesExpress2025.com to register, make hotel reservations, and see updates on convention activities. More details are being added all the time.

Register today for the Early Bird Discount!
Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!

GREATER HOUSTON TRAIN SHOW

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2025, 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.

Pasadena Convention Center

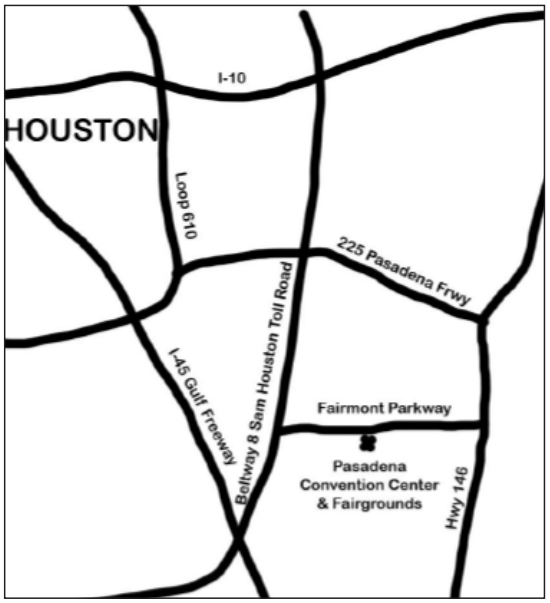
7902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX 77504
East of Beltway 8 on Fairmont Parkway

Adults & Youth $5 - Under 12 FREE - Max. $10 per family

Operating Layouts, Classes on Railroads and Modeling Subjects, National Model Railroad Association Contests, and Vendors from across the Southwest.

Sponsored by the **San Jacinto Model Railroad Club, Inc.** 501(c)3
Chairman: Steve Sandifer; steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net
Table Sales: Robert Ashcraft: crash8473@comcast.net

http://sanjacmodeltrains.org



Do you live in central Texas?

Whether you're new to model railroading, want a large layout but don't have the room, or just want to hang out with friends...

Come join us!

The Austin Model Railway Society is an HO scale club. Members of all ages meet monthly and participate in many ways, from electronics to scenery to operations.

AUSTIN MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY
EST AMRS 2017

For more information and how to join, check out our website at austinrailway.org!

Director and Department Reports

Treasurer

by Steve Sandifer
LSR Treasurer
steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net

It has been quiet on the fiscal side of the LSR for the past few months. The only transaction has been the purchase of two projector screens for use at conventions.

Houston has been very busy. With November as Model Railroad Month, folks have spent a lot of time getting their layouts updated for open houses. We have done this so many years that it seems automatic. A good time was had by all. Then on December 3 the San Jac had its annual Christmas Party with the gift exchange and steal. Paul Cesak had the most items stolen from him during the night. This year's excitement included a brass steam engine, a new airbrush, plenty of tools, a lot of HO cars, and even miniature figures of three of our members. N scale, as usual, was not well represented.

Balances as of September 24, 2024	
Checking	17,726.53
CDs	40,834.89
Total	**$58,561.42**
Income:	0.00
Expenditures:	
2 Projector Screens	726.00
Balances as of December 4, 2024	
Checking	17,001.53
CDs	41,040.34
Total	**$58,041.87**

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Dick Brannan
director@cowcatcherdivision.org

cowcatcherdivision.com

It had been a busy fall for the Cowcatcher Division. The Division participated in the Plano Train Show where the "Pay it Forward" module attracted a lot of interest and the Red River RPM meet in Forest Hills TX. Between these two events we were able to sign up several new members.

4014 visited Fort Worth for three days in mid-October and attracted some 35,000 visitors. Division 1 and 3 volunteers who were assisting Union Pacific with crowd control were able to get several group pictures taken in front of the very impressive locomotive.

In November, the Division did a speeder shed as a "make and take" clinic in various scales with strong participation including the young man below:

December ends the year with our annual Christmas Party complete with the famous (or "infamous", depending on your viewpoint) White Elephant gift exchange.

Dick Brannan
Director – Cowcatcher Division

Bayou Division 2

by Rod Fredericks
fredericks.rod@gmail.com

Two division meetings have been held in the Bayou Division, one in September and another in late November. The September meeting was hosted by the Crescent City Model Railroad Club at their layout in Metairie, LA (New Orleans area). The November meeting was hosted by the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders in Jackson LA. Although attendance was modest for both meetings, when the Blues Express 2025 convention was discussed the attendees were enthusiastic about working to make it a success. This is something new to the area. The last LSR convention in Division 2 was in the 1990's. There was a long discussion describing what the convention has to offer, and the need for volenteers to make work. When asked, a number of attendees raised their hands.

Of course, there were other topics at the Crescent City meeting. Matthew Lacrouts gave a slide and oral presentation Freedom Train 1976, which was very informative and intertaining. I followed him with Static Grass show and tell presentation.

The November meeting was hosted by the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders. There the subject was mainly on the Blues Express 2025 convention. There was a discussion of Who, What, When, Where and Why, of the Convention and volunteers stepped up for most of the critical positions to make it happen. Thanks to my daughter Bridget we have a working website, and registration is open. For more information, I refer you my Convention Update article earlier in this edition of the *Marker Lamp*.

Register for the convention today at BluesExpress2025.com!

Trinity River Division 3

by Charles Goodrich, MMR
director@cowcatcherdivision.org

trinityriverdivision.org

Division 3 has purchased audio and video equipment for our meeting room so that our meetings can be attended via Zoom. This equipment includes two 75-inch TV's, video and audio amplifiers, speakers and mixers. We have had many positive comments from people that they now able to hear the speakers and the large TV's can be seen easier. Equipment was specified by Marshal Leak, one of our members who professionally sets up sound and video equipment for conferences and conventions. Marshall was assisted by Jeff Rykiel who is building containers to store the equipment and make it easier to set up. We will eventually purchase a trailer to transport and store the equipment.

We ordered Division 3 shirts for everyone that wanted one. The shirts are royal blue and feature the person's name and the NMRA and Division 3 logo. Betty Mitchell headed up the ordering of shirts for the division.

Division 3 has had several good clinics this period.

Our August clinic was presented by Frank Baker, MMR. His clinic is about Building Structures. Frank is not from this area so he presented his clinic via zoom.

The September clinic was presented by Thomas Stephens. His clinic was on NMRA standards.

In October our clinic was presented by Duane Richardson. In his clinic he demonstrated how to build a kit. He built a speeder shed from start to finish showing all the steps needed to produce a high-quality structure.

For November we had a Make and Take clinic. It was conducted by Duane Richardson. We built a loading dock. Parts were precut on a laser for the scale requested by the participant. The dock was assembled at the meeting.

In December we had our annual Christmas party. It was a general get together with finger food and drinks. Attendees brought models that they were working on or had completed to show off to the group. We also had our annual white elephant exchange. It is always nice to get together and socialize with no special agenda.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Thiele
director@centexnmra.org

centexnmra.org

The fall has been busy in Division 4. At our September meeting we talked about the recent Austin Train Show and our success with the South Plains switching layout -- the line to operate on it was non-stop! We're now thinking about how we can improve the layout and operations, and perhaps setting up at other shows as well. I also did a clinic on planning a layout, and George Zapalac hosted a tour of his home layout.

Several folks from the Division attended the National Convention this summer and had a great time. If you can, I highly recommend attending this coming year's convention (plus, of course, the LSR convention).

At the November meeting, Frolin Marek gave a great clinic on railfanning, and we continued to work on the Division's modules.

Finally, this will be my last report as Division Director. I am stepping down as I am moving out of the LSR by the time this report is published. Doug Taylor is being installed as my replacement for the remainder of my current term. The Division is in great hands with him and the other volunteers.

Bob

[We are sad to see Bob go but excited to welcome Doug. At the November meeting, a special Deal or Duds was held where the Division surprised Bob with a $250 gift card. Steve Jackobs, President of the Austin Model Railway Society, also presented Bob with a custom-painted and lettered passenger car (the "Robert Thiele"). -Ed.]

West Texas Division 5

by Brooks Willig
Headroadie2004@gmail.com

Newsletter

As 2024 comes to a close I would like to give a recap on what we have presented this year in our monthly meetings. There are some months I forgot to record down how many where in attendance.

January 15th - Zoom
Steve Sandifer - Shipping Non-Traditional Livestock
February 19th- Zoom
Marita Richards - History of the Pullman Standard Company
March 18th - Zoom
Brooks Willig - Fun with flocking trees
April 15th - Zoom (10 in attendance)
Duane Richardson, MMR - How to build a better model
May 20th - Zoom (8 in attendance)
Roundtable discussion on 3d printing
June - no meeting
July 15th - Zoom
Brooks Willig - Staining wood with Vetero Stains
August - no meeting
September 16th - Zoom
Robert Thomas - New layout project Wichita & Northwestern
October 21 - Zoom (9 in attendance)
Frolin Marek - Marek Mountain RR #4
November - no meeting
December 16th - Zoom
John Emerson - 3d Printed railcars

The Lubbock Model Railroad Association is going strong with three train shows this year at the American Windmill Museum in Lubbock.

The Abilene club is doing well, holding a few open houses this year. The inaugural Abilene Railroad Festival occurred on September 6-7. This event had activities and learning spread across several blocks downtown Abilene and had a great turnout.

I invite everyone in the region to join the Division 5 monthly ZOOM meetings. Use this link below to sign up for updates from the division, as well as meeting announcements and the link to join. http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9

Brooks Willig
Division 5 Director

South Texas Division 6

by Roy Kaiser
fr8train@gvtc.com

Hello to everyone from South Texas:

We continue to have great turnouts at our bi-monthly Division 6 meetings. We are averaging more than 30 people per meeting. Each meeting has been complete with a clinic by a local model railroader and each meeting has included a home layout tour afterward.

Of special focus for the past few months has been the development of a new division logo. We made our decision at the October meeting and are very pleased to display the winning choice above. We feel it accomplishes all the requirements to fit our area, with the Texas flag background and the Sothern Pacific color scheme while proudly including our NMRA and LSR heritage.

Our current membership stands at 72 which is the result of 5 members withdrawing and 4 new members joining in the past 3 months. We have embarked on a path to try and find why members leave the NMRA. Is it a lack of interest, a lack of financial ability or is there something we could have done differently to sway their decision.

In closing, I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude for the continue support of our sponsors Discount Model Trains, Papa Ben's Train Place, Prototype N Scale Models, Maverick Metalwork and the Longhorn Café. Thank you all.

North Louisiana Division 7

by Don Kimmell
elf4kcs@me.com

(No report received)

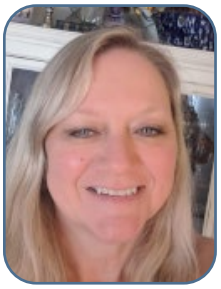
Texas Gulf Division 8

by Phil Stewart
pstewart1225@yahoo.com

texasgulfdivision.org

(No report received)

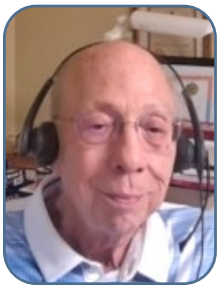
Director At-Large



by Deborah Gifford
gifforddeborah5@gmail.com

(No report received)

Director At-Large



by Gene Mangum
semangum@windstream.net

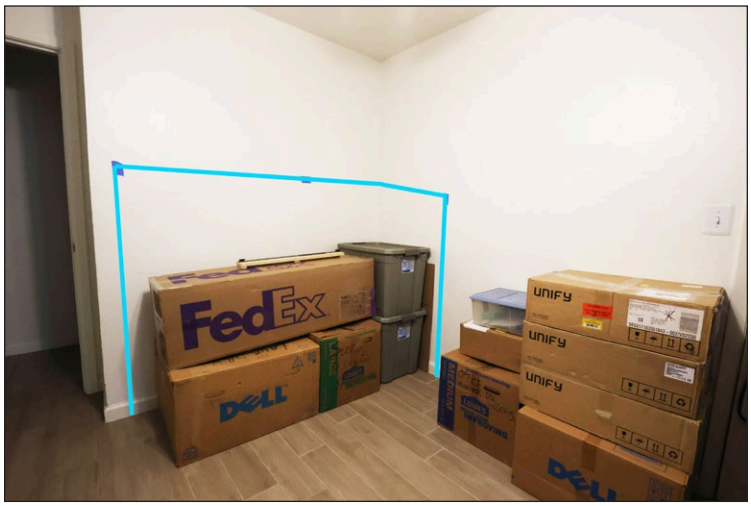
(No report received)

Director At-Large

by Michael Harang
miharang@gmail.com

As mentioned in my recent reports, I am still not in my own home. This condition has been extended due to interest rate fluctuations and a lack of available properties. My model building has therefore taken a hiatus as all of my "stuff" is stored and is inaccessible. Therefore, I have focused on operating and gathering the required hours needed for the Chief Dispatcher AP certificate. While I have and continue to thoroughly enjoy the fun, fellowship, and learning experience that operating offers, I miss model building.

I recalled hearing that the Golden Spike award is not available once someone earns his/her MMR. So, my thoughts have focused on working toward earning the GS award while I am in my housing predicament. I have only a small area available in the 10' by 10' bedroom that I use for my office and storage room. But, after some measuring and calculating, a TOMA module (The One Module Approach - as described in *Model Railroad Hobbyist* by Joe Fugate) measuring 6 feet long by 30 inches deep and standing 54 inches tall can fit in the space. These dimensions fulfill the eight square feet of layout minimum requirement of the GS award. By using TOMA, someday this module will be moved into our next home where it will be the beginning of a larger layout - no need to scrap it and start over, just build more TOMA modules and expand. This concept really makes sense to me especially in my current situation. The module will have storage boxes under it, but at 54" tall, that should not be an issue. Here is a photo of the space I intend to use:



While I am working out the details on the module, its track plan, what structures to include, and its overall theme, I have started on some car modeling. During a recent trip to Discount Model Trains in Addison, I picked up a ATSF 40' Bx-34 boxcar manufactured by Bowser as a Ready-To-Run model as well as some basic tools and other essentials. This will be the first of the required six units of rolling stock. In a future article, I'll show how I transform this R-T-R model into a well-dressed actor for my stage production by adding details and weathering based on prototype photos.

See you down the tracks,
Michael Harang
LSR At-Large Director
Photography Chairman

Achievement Program

by Duane Richardson, MMR
LSR Achievement Chair
pinecreekstation@verizon.net

With the holiday upon us, I hope that each of you are finding time for family and friends as well as to work on your layouts or future layouts. While your working, take a look around at what you have built and put pen to paper to fill out your AP paperwork.

I hope Santa brings you a lump of coal (they are great for making rock molds).

Since our last update we have had the following certificates awarded:

Certificate	Date	Name	Div
Scenery	7/20/2024	Russell Gifford	1
Electrical	8/20/2024	Harold Berenzweig	1
Electrical	8/20/2025	Wayne Kelly	3
Golden Spike	8/20/2025	Mal Noone	3
Volunteer	9/20/2025	Kimberly Hays	1

Contests

by Ray Byer
LSR Contest Chair
raybyer@yahoo.com

I hope all who are reading this report are finding them self in a cool place. As all of you know the LSR is having a Convention in the great state of Louisiana in the city of Baton Rouge in 2025.

Thanks to all the people who made this possible. Working with the Host Group and the LSR, we have come up with a special contest. The special contest will be a Diorama/Cube 12" x12"x12".

Following the same rules for the LSR Contest rules for Displays/ Modules. (Models or modules which include supplemental scenery. For a model to be in the display/ module category, the scenery elements are not pertinent to the function of the model or primary structure. The display can be an on-line or off-line model or models.)

So, you ask, how is this difference from the standard Display / Modules that has been entered in the past? Well, you will have to put on your thinking cap.

You see in this special contest, the display must measure 12x12x12, meaning 12 inches in width, 12 inches in depth, and 12 in height, basically a cube. The measurements are the same for ALL SCALES. LSR has had a 12 x12 contest in the past but now we add height to the puzzle. This means nothing above 12" in height above the base of the display. Also to add to the fun, you will need to add seven Items somewhere on your display. They are: an old shack or outbuilding or store, a Pepsi or RC Cola or Dixi beer sign, water, railroad items, a cypress tree or a tree that is in a swamp or by water, magnolia, an a clock.

Some of you are thinking that the small scales will be easy and the large scales will be harder. This may be true - or is it? Remember: think outside of the box. You already have the first step. You are thinking about it. You have the second step. The size of the display, remember have fun and model.

For more information or contact your LSR Contest Chairperson by email.

Conventions

by Joe Leising
LSR Conventions Chair
joe@leising.com

Registration is open for the Blues Express 2025 annual Lone Star Region Convention. Visit BluesExpress2025.com to take advantage of the Early Bird Convention Registration discounts, make hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South convention host hotel, and learn about the convention activities.

The Blues Express 2025 LSR convention will take place in Baton Rouge, LA on June 26-29, 2025. Baton Rouge is the home of many historical events, and a city with many interesting attractions. The conventions discounted hotel group rate is available for the nights on June 25-30, inclusive, allowing for time to both experience the city and enjoy the convention. Note: The hotels link on the convention's website will default to arrival on Thursday, June 26th, departure on Sunday, June 29th, and a room for one person. Update the information at the top of the page if needed.

The convention will feature clinicians from multiple NMRA regions, some of which are already listed on the BluesExpress2025.com website, and some will be presenting new, never seen before clinics. As a LSR convention has not been held in Louisiana in over thirty years, this is a great opportunity to visit layouts and participate in operating sessions on layouts that you might not have had the opportunity to see and do in the past.

Hotel rooms and convention meeting rooms are all under one roof, at the Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South, providing the convenience of taking the elevator from your hotel room to the convention activities. The hotel features a restaurant, room service, lounge, fitness center, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

It is not only the destination; it is also the journey! On the way to Baton Rouge, visit the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum (https://LAExhibitMuseum.org) in Shreveport, LA, home of several amazing dioramas and/or the Southern Forest Heritage Museum (https://ForestHeritageMuseum.org) in Long Leaf, LA and ride the Doodlebug around the historic grounds, and/or visit the restored Crowell & Spencer Lumber Company Sawmill which operated from 1895 to 1954. Then to Baton Rouge to enjoy a fantastic LSR convention.

Looking forward to seeing old friends and making new friends at the Blues Express 2025 Annual LSR Convention in Baton Rouge. Make sure to take advantage of the Early Bird discounts and register today. Convention activities will be updated at BluesExpress2025.com as they become available, so visit often.

Education

by Don Winn, MMR
LSR Education Chair
donswinn@gmail.com

Howdy,

How many magazines do you receive regularly, either in print or electronically? I get about a dozen: *Marker Lamp*, *NMRA magazine*, *MR, Trains*, *Classic Trains*, *RMC*, *Layout Design Journal*, *Cowcatcher*, and the SAMRA club newsletter, along with publications from historical societies. Who writes all of those articles that I enjoy reading?

Model Railroader and *Railroad Model Craftsman* have paid staff that write some of their stories, but almost all of the articles in the other magazines are written by volunteers. People like you and me! If it wasn't for volunteers, most of the magazines in our hobby would cease to exist. Yes, really!

I'm asking you to think about this, and consider writing something for the next edition of the *Marker Lamp*.

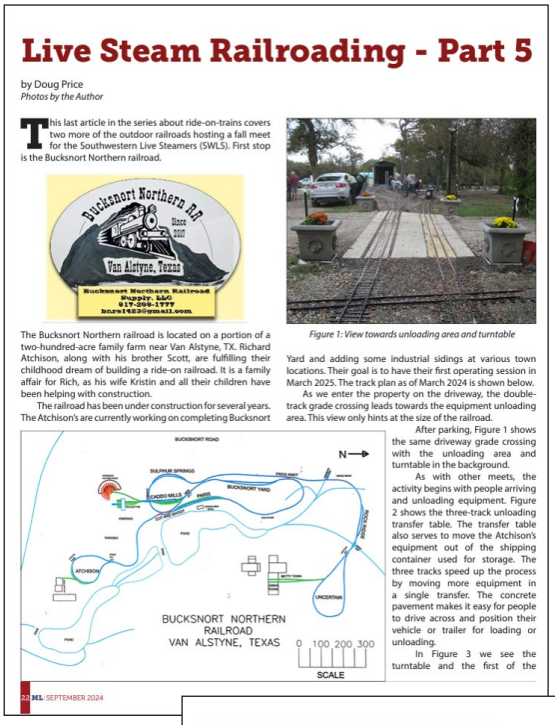
Keep in mind that you don't have to be an expert about anything to get your article published. Just think of yourself as a reporter. Write about a model you just built. Write about your friend's layout or the local club layout, just like what you see in *Model Railroader*. Write about a fun model railroading event that you have attended, like a train show or operating event. Write about a neat tool you have discovered.

By writing articles you earn points towards your Author Achievement Program certificate. Articles in regional magazines like our Marker Lamp earn 2 points per page. You'll need 42 points to complete the certificate, so if my math is correct, that equates to 21 pages. That may sound like a lot of writing, but your photos count in that total. Doug Price has written a series of 5 articles on the topic of live stream operations, which easily put him over 42 points. Writing may seem like a chore, but when you are writing about a topic that interests you, the words almost jump onto the page.

Doug's last article was in the September *Marker Lamp*, as was Cliff Scherer's nice article about operations. These guys write about aspects of the hobby that they are passionate about. It's fun to share what we enjoy, and it is great reading and inspiration for the readers.

The *Marker Lamp* is always looking for more articles. Please, send in your article. We can't wait to read it!

Thank You!
Don Winn
Education Chair



Live Steam Railroading - Part 5

by Doug Price
Photos by the Author

This last article in the series about ride-on-trains covers two more of the outdoor railroads hosting a fall meet for the Southwestern Live Steamers (SWLS). First stop is the Bucksnort Northern railroad.

Figure 1: View towards unloading area and turntable

The Bucksnort Northern railroad is located on a portion of a two-hundred-acre family farm near Van Alstyne, TX. Richard Atchison, along with his brother Scott, are fulfilling their childhood dream of building a ride-on railroad. It is a family affair for Rich, as his wife Kristin and all their children have been helping with construction.

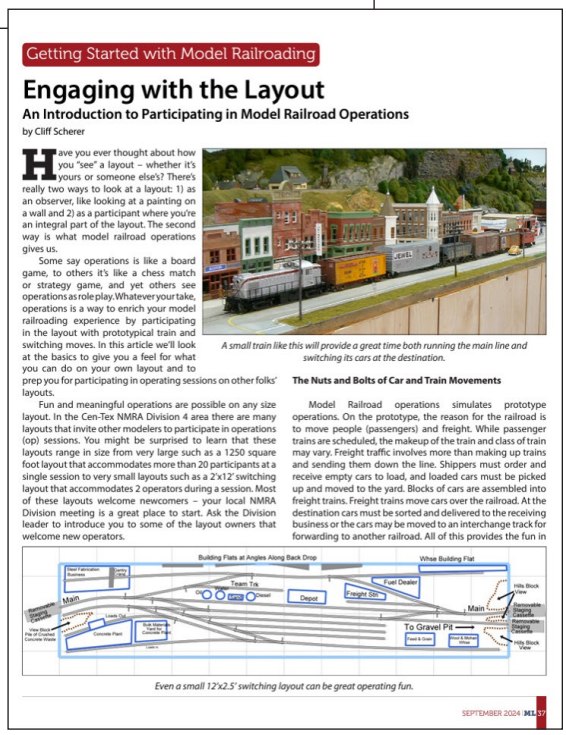
The railroad has been under construction for several years. The Atchison's are currently working on completing Bucksnort Yard and adding some industrial sidings at various town locations. Their goal is to have their first operating session in March 2025. The track plan as of March 2024 is shown below.

As we enter the property on the driveway, the double-track grade crossing leads towards the equipment unloading area. This view only hints at the size of the railroad.

After parking, Figure 1 shows the same driveway grade crossing with the unloading area and turntable in the background.

As with other meets, the activity begins with people arriving and unloading equipment. Figure 2 shows the three-track unloading transfer table. The transfer table also serves to move the Atchison's equipment out of the shipping container used for storage. The three tracks speed up the process by moving more equipment in a single transfer. The concrete pavement makes it easy for people to drive across and position their vehicle or trailer for loading or unloading.

In Figure 3 we see the turntable and the first of the



Getting Started with Model Railroading

Engaging with the Layout

An Introduction to Participating in Model Railroad Operations

by Cliff Scherer

Have you ever thought about how you "see" a layout – whether it's yours or someone else's? There's really two ways to look at a layout: 1) as an observer, like looking at a painting on a wall and 2) as a participant where you're an integral part of the layout. The second way is what model railroad operations gives us.

Some say operations is like a board game, to others it's like a chess match or strategy game, and yet others see operations as role play. Whatever your take, operations is a way to enrich your model railroading experience by participating in the layout with prototypical train and switching moves. In this article we'll look at the basics to give you a feel for what you can do on your own layout and to prep you for participating in operating sessions on other folks' layouts.

A small train like this will provide a great time both running the main line and switching its cars at the destination.

Fun and meaningful operations are possible on any size layout. In the Cen-Tex NMRA Division 4 area there are many layouts that invite other modelers to participate in operations (op) sessions. You might be surprised to learn that these layouts range in size from very large such as a 1250 square foot layout that accommodates more than 20 participants at a single session to very small layouts such as a 2'x12' switching layout that accommodates 2 operators during a session. Most of these layouts welcome newcomers – your local NMRA Division meeting is a great place to start. Ask the Division leader to introduce you to some of the layout owners that welcome new operators.

The Nuts and Bolts of Car and Train Movements

Model Railroad operations simulates prototype operations. On the prototype, the reason for the railroad is to move people (passengers) and freight. While passenger trains are scheduled, the makeup of the train and class of train may vary. Freight traffic involves more than making up trains and sending them down the line. Shippers must order and receive empty cars to load, and loaded cars must be picked up and moved to the yard. Blocks of cars are assembled into freight trains. Freight trains move cars over the railroad. At the destination cars must be sorted and delivered to the receiving business or the cars may be moved to an interchange track for forwarding to another railroad. All of this provides the fun in

Even a small 12'x2.5' switching layout can be great operating fun.

Membership

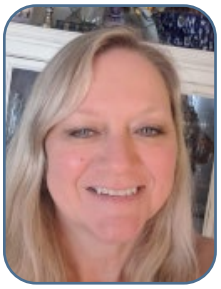
by Jared Roberts
LSR Membership Chair
jlroberts0418@gmail.com

No rerails this month and one deceased member in the region. Please continue to talk to your membership about the free Grouper program for qualified participants. Make sure and be kind to each other and new members. Invite them to your layouts and be welcoming. Be the change you want to see!

Kudos to Divisions 1, 2, and 6 for positive growth this year.

Division	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
One	189	184	182	178	180	178	172	168	167	172
Two	87	81	81	82	85	84	83	83	83	84
Three	206	205	191	191	190	189	178	175	167	166
Four	143	141	128	124	127	129	130	132	131	128
Five	36	34	33	28	30	30	29	29	29	28
Six	80	80	75	74	76	76	76	75	72	76
Seven	25	24	22	22	21	21	21	21	21	21
Eight	206	204	199	199	194	193	199	200	198	195
LSR Total	**972**	**953**	**911**	**898**	**903**	**900**	**888**	**881**	**868**	**872**

Nominations/Elections



by Deborah Gifford
gifforddeborah5@gmail.com

Nominations are closing soon for the 2025 LSR elections. The positions open this year include:

- President
- Treasurer
- Division 1 Director
- Division 3 Director
- Division 5 Director
- Division 7 Director

This is your time to answer the call. If you would like to run for any of these positions or nominate someone else, please contact me at gifforddeborah5@gmail.com. To run, submit an election form and a short biography.

And even if you're not interested in running at this time, remember to **VOTE** in the new year!

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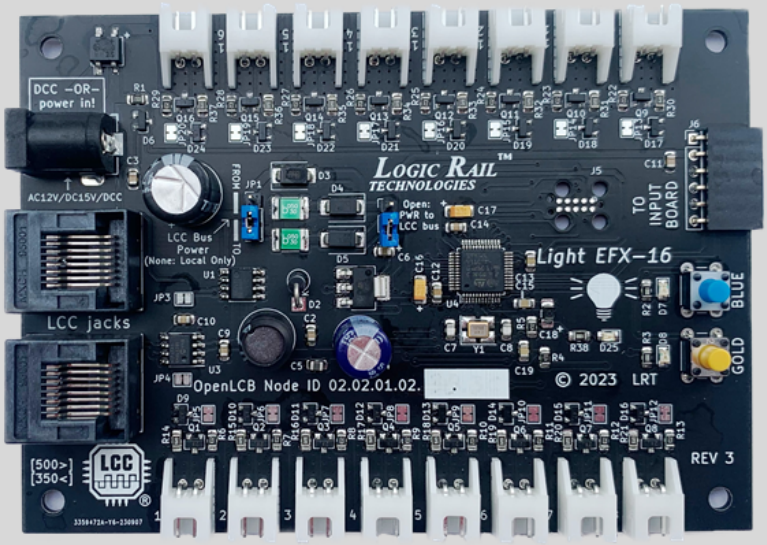
For more information or to submit an ad, contact:

Steve Sandifer
steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net



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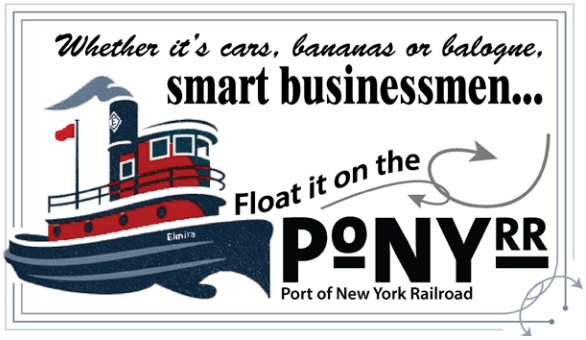

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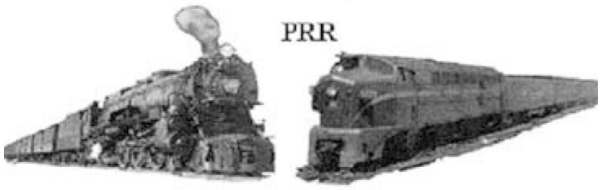
THE ALLEGHENY RAILROAD
HORSESHOE CURVE
ALTOONA



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The Marker Lamp

Submission deadline for next issue is February 15